



# THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION  
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 72.

Price, Five Cents.



BUFFALO BILL CALMLY AND FIRMLY KEPT THE DESPERADO DESERTER COVERED, ALTHOUGH SEVEN OTHER REVOLVERS WERE POINTED AT HIS OWN BREAST.





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Price Five Cents.

## Buffalo Bill and the Black Heart Desperado;

OR,

### The Wipe-Out at Last Chance.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

#### CHAPTER I.

DR. DICK.

Buffalo Bill was on a visit to the mining town of Last Chance, a wild and lawless little settlement composed of miners, cattlemen, gambling sharps, with a good sprinkling of Western "bad men" and outlaws. The town—if it could be called a town—was on the extreme western frontier, and this was not the first time that Buffalo Bill had visited it.

On one previous occasion he had been summoned there to round up a band of outlaws, for, although small, Last Chance was famous all over the West for its utter disregard of law and order.

When Buffalo Bill visited it, however, he soon succeeded in instilling a proper respect for the law into the hearts of the inhabitants, when backed up by his own good six-shooters. He left the town taking several of its most turbulent characters with him, bound securely, on their way to jail, and his name became a byword in the little mining settlement.

This time, however, his visit to Last Chance was on a more peaceable errand.

In his previous experience in the town, two of its inhabitants had stood him in good stead as friends, coming to his rescue when he was in danger of being overpowered and killed by a number of outlaws whom he was fighting single-handed.

One of these men was Landlord Larry, a burly, hail-fellow-well-met style of man, the proprietor of the only hotel in the place, as well as two of its richest gold mines, and a strong advocate of law and order in the settlement, as well he might be, for, being the richest man there, he had the most to lose at the hands of robbers and outlaws.

The other man was a dashing individual known as Dr. Dick, who had appeared suddenly in the settlement from no one knew where, with a good horse, saddle and arms, splendid clothes, and an apparently unlimited supply of hard cash.

His chief occupation was gambling, although the skill he showed in dressing wounds, caring for and nursing the sick and setting broken bones, of which there were plenty among the hard-drinking, hard-fighting and hard-riding miners and cattlemen, speedily earned for him the title of doctor. Besides the name of "Dr. Dick," he had won for



himself the nickname of "Gold Gambler," by his skill with the cards and the abundant supplies of the yellow metal with which his pockets were lined.

Mysterious as he was, he soon became the most popular man in the settlement, and both he and Landlord Larry had been of great assistance to Buffalo Bill in his round-up of the outlaws in Last Chance.

When Buffalo Bill had left Last Chance on that occasion, he had promised both Dr. Dick and Landlord Larry to pay them a visit as soon as he had a chance.

A little later on in the year, while passing near the town, he determined to ride into it, spend a few days there—as he was on furlough at the time—and see his friends once more.

He met with a hearty reception, not only from Dr. Dick and Landlord Larry, but from the more respectable of the citizens of Last Chance, who cheered the great scout to the echo as he rode into the town on his prancing horse.

It was evening when the scout arrived, and he, Dr. Dick and Landlord Larry were soon seated at a bountiful supper in the hotel of the latter.

They enjoyed their meal, apparently, and Buffalo Bill was evidently pleased with his friend, Dr. Dick.

He found the man a genial companion, witty, educated, one who appeared to have seen much of the world, and who talked well.

Why such a man came to Last Chance, he could not understand.

Coming out of the supper-room, they found that darkness had fallen, and the miners had adjourned to the saloons and gambling dens, except a few, who were smoking their pipes upon the benches that were scattered here and there among the trees.

"Landlord Larry gets a good brand of cigars for me, Mr. Cody," said Dr. Dick, "so suppose you come over to my cabin and enjoy one, while, if you are not well accommodated, I can put up a cot for you there, as I have an extra one."

"Thank you, I'll go over and have a smoke with you," was the scout's reply.

So over to the cabin they went, and Dr. Dick brought out some really fine cigars, and put a couple of chairs outside.

Lighting their cigars, the two smoked for several moments in silence, each waiting for the other to speak.

At last Buffalo Bill broke the silence by saying: "Do you know, you remind me of Sergeant Manton Mayhew, of the —th Cavalry."

"Yes?"

"The more I see of you, the more you are like him; in fact, except that he wore a mustache, and you are clean-shaven, you are a most striking likeness of the sergeant, in face, as well as form."

"Did you know him well?"

"No; for he was ordered to Fort Faraway with his company, as a reinforcement, and I guided the troops there on the march from Whipple.

"Several days after his arrival he was killed."

"I heard so. Will you tell me the story of his killing?"

"It seems that the one who took his life, a sergeant in the same company, Wallace Weston by name, was off on a scout with his troop, when Sergeant Mayhew arrived, and they did not meet for some time.

"But one night Sergeant Mayhew went to the quarters of Sergeant Weston, and the two must have recognized each other as old foes.

"What occurred, no one seems to know, and the trial by court-martial brought out little from Weston."

"But Weston killed him?"

"Yes."

"What excuse did he give?"

"None, more than that he said that he acted in self-defense."

"Nothing more?"

"Nothing."

"Did he tell nothing of their having met before?"

"Not a word, though all believed that Weston had some strong provocation, as he was one of the best soldiers and most popular man in the army."

"And Mayhew?"

"Was unpopular."

"Why?"

"He was haughty, overbearing, high-tempered, and a man whom all regarded as a mysterious character."

"Was anything known about his past?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"And of Weston's antecedents?"

"He also was a mystery, and yet he was greatly liked."

"Has any effort been made to find out about the two men?"

"Every effort, but without avail."

"And the result of the court-martial?"

"Was to sentence Weston to death."

"Thank Heaven for that!"

"Sir?"

"I say thank Heaven for that."

"You knew Mayhew, then?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you a secret after a few more questions."

"Well?"

"Was Weston executed?"

"He was not."

"Why?"

"He escaped a moment before the order was to be given for his execution."

"Escaped from hundreds of soldiers?"



"Yes; he was a daring man, and a dashing one.

"I had ridden to the headquarters just to try and get a reprieve, for Weston had saved my life, and I had been the cause of his enlisting.

"I failed to get the reprieve, rode up just at the last moment to report to the commanding officer, when Weston made a break, bounded upon my horse, and got away, for none of the guns were loaded, and he was across the stream into the timber before he could be fired upon by the soldiers."

"So he escaped death?"

"For the time being only, for he made for the desert, and there we found him dead, some days after, lying by the body of his horse.

"He had starved to death in the desert."

"And again I say thank Heaven!" exclaimed Dr. Dick, sternly.

## CHAPTER II.

### DR. DICK'S STORY.

Buffalo Bill felt, when he heard the doctor express his gratification at the death of the slayer of Sergeant Mayhew, that the two were in some way connected.

The striking resemblance between Dr. Dick and the sergeant was not an accidental one, the scout was assured.

Then there was an almost malignant glimmer in the eyes of the doctor, when he rejoiced in the death of Sergeant Weston, that showed he had some strong reason for wishing him dead.

Puffing furiously at his cigar a moment, the doctor thus calmed himself, and then said:

"Can you keep a secret, Buffalo Bill?"

"It can, if it is requested of me."

"I will tell you one."

"Do not do so, unless you really wish to confide in me."

"I do."

"Well, I will keep your secret; doctor."

"My name is Mayhew."

"Ah!"

"Yes, Richard Mayhew."

"Well?"

"Sergeant Mayhew was my brother."

"I half-suspected it."

"He was more."

"How so?"

"We were born at the same time."

"Twins?"

"There is more to tell yet."

"Indeed?"

"My mother gave birth to three children."

"Triplets."

"Yes, and all boys."

"Well?"

"We all lived to grow up strong and healthy."

"You look it; and so did Sergeant Mayhew."

"And so did my brother Hugh."

"Hugh!" and Buffalo Bill slightly started.

"Yes; our names were Manton, Hugh and Richard."

"And then?"

"Our parents were refined, educated people, and quite wealthy.

"Where we dwelt matters not, but we lived in a country village, and, attending a country school, met there a boy by the name of—well, never mind now, for I'll tell you later who he was.

"He was about our age, and we were great chums, for with my brother and that boy we formed a gay quartet.

"I was the first to suffer at his hands, for, though appearing never to study and never being up in his letters, it was all put on, for he was a hard student at home, and when the examination day came he took the first prizes from me in everything, when I was sure of them, and all felt that I would win.

"I felt disgraced, and more so when my sweetheart deserted me for him.

"Half broken-hearted, I left home and went to sea, where I was taken as an assistant in the navy to a surgeon.

"He left home a year later, to also go into the navy as a midshipman.

"In his absence, my old sweetheart had been won by my brother Manton, and, when she grew old enough, they were engaged to be married.

"But, before the event came off, my rival returned home; his uniform dazzled the girl, his honeyed words won her back, and she deserted Manton for her old lover.

"It was said that he had secretly married her, and soon after his departure he got into some trouble which forced him to resign from the navy.

"He returned home, and never went near her, and, broken-hearted, she went into a convent, taking the veil, while he began to pay attention to a beautiful girl to whom my brother Hugh was engaged, my brother Manton having left home in his sorrow, and, coming West, had gone to mining, which he gave up, after making nothing at it, to enter the army.

"The truth was, his life had been wrecked by loving his sweetheart, whom he idolized.

"A fascinating man, this villain at once set to work to win my brother Hugh's ladylove from him.

"By false accusations against Manton, he parted them, then won her regard, and her father took him into partnership with him in the banking business.

"What his hatred to my family was, I do not know, but, as he got charge of the banking firm where all my father's



business centered, he so managed his plot that he crushed him, sending him to the wall, and causing him to lose his every dollar.

"Indignation was so great against him that he was forced to leave the town, and he did so upon the eve of his marriage with the poor girl, whom he deserted, causing her to take her own life.

"My brother Hugh also came West, and turned miner, and, I fear, went to the bad, for men called him a desperado, but it was all because he was driven to it by the acts of one whom he had once loved as a brother.

"Taking a fancy to medicine, I studied it aboard ship, and, saving up my money, after cruising several years, graduated in a Western medical college.

"I settled in the West to practice, and was doing splendidly, when suddenly I found I was the cause of suspicion for some reason.

"One night the Vigilantes waited upon me, accused me of being a fugitive from justice, and said that they intended to hang me.

"As my life was at stake, I defended myself, shot down several of them, sprang upon a horse, and made my escape.

"Afterward I learned that the masked leader of the Vigilantes was none other than the bitter foe of my kindred.

"Broken up in my practice, and having stained my hand with blood, I became a wanderer, going to Mexico, and entering the service there as a surgeon.

"Though I stood well, I longed to get back among my own people, and returned recently to my home.

"My parents were dead, had died of broken hearts, and I held not a tie there to bind me, if I had dared remain, which I did not.

"So I went to California, and practiced a year, then to the New Mexico mines, and, turning gambler, drifted out here, and here I am, making a fortune—but for whom?

"Now, Buffalo Bill, let me tell you that the man who wrought ruin upon those of my name was Wallace Weston!"

### CHAPTER III.

#### A SUSPICION.

It was with the deepest of interest that Buffalo Bill had listened to the story of Dr. Dick.

The doctor had told it in a low, fervent manner, at times in a tone that was pathetic, and every word had carried conviction.

Buffalo Bill felt sorry for the man before him, his new-found friend, and, whether he had told the whole truth as to himself, he could not but feel that he was a man of

mystery, one who had seen much, had known much of life, and had led a strange existence.

The secret was out, apparently, if there was not more to tell, why Dr. Dick hid himself in a far Western mining camp, when he was a man to adorn any society.

Then there came across the mind of the scout the remembrance that he had something to say.

He had heard of a desperado in the mines who was known as Black Bill, but whom some one said bore the name of Mayhew.

So he asked:

"Was the man known as Black Bill your brother?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Some one who had known him in the past told me that he had once been a gentleman, and that his name was Mayhew."

"It is with shame that I confess it, but poor Hugh's sorrows drove him to recklessness, and he became a desperado, I heard, though I trust not so bad as that."

"From all accounts, he was a desperado, and of the worst type, for he gained by his cruel acts and man-killing the name of Black Bill."

"Poor fellow!"

"Do you know where he is now?"

"I do not, and I am anxious to find him, for I have enough for both of us, and far more, and I could redeem him."

"I am sorry to tell you, Dr. Dick, that it is too late."

The doctor started at this; his face paled, and he asked, quickly:

"What do you mean, Mr. Cody?"

"I mean, doctor, that when I came here from the fort, I took quite a wide circuit, looking into a country with which I was not much acquainted.

"When I did not believe there was a human being to be found, Indian or paleface, over in the Grand Canyon, I came upon a camp.

"It was the camp of palefaces, I saw at a glance.

"There was every indication that several horses had been staked out there for perhaps weeks, and the amount of ashes and cut wood told me the same thing.

"There was a large wickiup, the bones of deer heads and other indications of quite a stay there of several men.

"But, in searching about the camp, down upon the banks of a stream, at the base of a large quaking-aspen tree, I saw a grave.

"It had been covered over by logs, to prevent the body from being torn up by coyotes.

"Into the back of the tree, which, you know, is now white and soft, had been cut, by a skilled carver, the following," and Buffalo Bill took from his pocket a notebook, turned to a page, and read:



"THIS GRAVE  
"MARKS THE LAST RESTING PLACE  
OF  
"HUGH MAYHEW,  
*alias*  
"BLACK BILL,  
"KILLED IN A DUEL WITH ONE HE  
HAD CRUELLY WRONGED.  
"TO THE DEAD—PEACE."

"Buffalo Bill, that is my brother Hugh who rests in that grave. I know it, for my heart tells me so, and that leaves but me, for Manton is also gone—killed by one whom he wronged, and that one means Wallace Weston."

"The name tells you that it is your brother, Dr. Dick, and the *alias* also, for I said he was known as Black Bill."

"Too true."

"But Wallace Weston did not kill him."

"Why do you say so?"

"Have you forgotten that he is dead?"

"But he escaped execution, you told me."

"True, to die upon the desert."

"Can you prove this?"

"I was the guide who led Lieutenant Tompkins and his men in pursuit."

"And you say that he starved to death?"

"Yes."

"You know this?"

"I do."

"How do you know it, Mr. Cody?"

"We came, as I told you, to his dead body upon the desert, lying by the side of a large rock that stood alone."

"The wolves had begun to devour him, but his body was there in his uniform, with my saddle and bridle near, for he had fled upon my horse."

"We buried him there, and rolled the large rock upon his grave."

"And yet I have a strong suspicion, a belief, that Wallace Weston is not dead—that he still lives," said Dr. Dick, in a low, earnest voice.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PROOF WANTED.

Dr. Dick had heard Buffalo Bill's story of his finding the deserted camp, and the grave near it, with the inscription cut upon it.

He had seemed to feel deeply the death of his brother, bad as he appeared to be, and his face and manner showed that he had loved the erring one devotedly.

"We were three, yet like one, nearer than brothers even are wont to be, for you know we were of the same age,

strangely alike in form and feature, yes, in voice and manner, curious even.

"Now Hugh has followed Manton to the grave, and I alone am left. Mr. Cody, do you know who killed my brother Hugh?"

"I certainly do not, sir."

"I do."

"Whom do you suspect of the deed?"

"But one man, of course."

"Who may he be?"

"But one man would have done the deed."

"I am not so sure of that, for what I have heard of Black Bill, he had many enemies."

"Still, that one man killed him."

"Who?"

"Why, Wallace Weston, of course."

"But I told you Weston was dead."

"I do not believe it—pardon me; I do not mean to doubt you, but I do doubt the fact of his death."

"I was the guide of the party that found his body, as I told you."

"Yes, his body had been torn by the coyotes."

"Partially, yes."

"Was his face disfigured?"

"Yes, very much so."

"Beyond recognition?"

"In a measure, it was; but there was the black hair, the beard of several days' growth, the ring he wore on his little finger, uniform, hat, boots, all to denote that it was Sergeant Weston, while my saddle, bridle and outfit were there."

"He ran off with your horse?"

"Yes, he rode him away in his escape."

"Was it your horse?"

"No, for I have that animal now with me."

"How did that happen?"

"He pushed my horse, which had been hard ridden by me when I went to try and get the reprieve, until he broke down."

"Just when the animal failed him he found a stray horse, mounted him in full view of his pursuers, and pushed into the desert."

"Their horses being used up, they returned, and I was sent with a fresh party, under the same officer, Lieutenant Tompkins, to follow the trail. We did so, and found the body, as stated."

"Would you take oath that it was the body of Wallace Weston?"

"I never swear upon an uncertainty, Dr. Dick, and it may be possible that it was not Weston; but, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it certainly was."

"Now, I cannot believe it was."

"Why?"



"Well, the man who cut that inscription into the tree where my brother was buried stated that he was killed by one he had cruelly wronged."

"Yes."

"I believe that Wallace Weston killed him."

"But you say that he had been wronged by Weston."

"Very true; but that was his slayer's way of putting it."

"Still, he had wronged many a man, from all accounts of him."

"Yet no one knew him as Hugh Mayhew!"

"Ah!"

"His name was cut there."

"Yes."

"Hugh Mayhew, *alias* Black Bill."

"Yes."

"Then Wallace Weston alone knew who he was, and he killed him."

"Might he not, before he died, made known who he was?"

"No, Mr. Cody, for the sake of those dear to him, he would have hidden the fact that Black Bill was Hugh Mayhew."

"No; he was killed by Wallace Weston, who, I feel sure, is not dead."

"Well, I can say no more than I have to convince you that he is."

"Where was this lone camp?"

"It was some twenty miles from the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and at a large spring in a heavy piece of timber."

"A beautiful valley ran down to the Grand Canyon, a view of which could be obtained from the camp."

"Did you notice from whence the trail had come?"

"It was too long after to discover any trail, of course, but I noticed holes dug near, which could only have been done by a dog."

"Ah! and I have heard that my brother's constant companion and truest friend was a large dog, half Siberian bloodhound, half mastiff."

"Yes, I have also heard the same thing, doctor."

"Well, Mr. Cody, I thank you for your kindness in bearing with me, and though I am convinced that my brother Hugh is dead, I am equally sure that it was Wallace Weston who killed him, and that our old enemy is still alive."

"Some day I will know, for I want proof one way or the other, and will have it."

"If he lives, then it will be his life or mine, for I am revengeful," and the face of Dr. Dick showed that he meant what he said.

## CHAPTER V.

### LARRY'S DEN.

When Buffalo Bill left the doctor's cabin, the latter escorted him, remarking as they walked over toward the hotel:

"You must make my shanty your home, Mr. Cody, whenever you feel like coming there."

"I will show you where I keep my key, so if I am away, go in and help yourself."

The scout thanked him, and said that he would drop over often.

He was greatly impressed with the strange man, whose cruel circumstances seemed to have driven him far from a field where he could have made name and fortune for himself in his profession.

He liked the man and knew that in spite of his light-hearted manner, he was one who suffered, who carried a skeleton in his breast.

But he was glad to have met him and formed his friendship, and frankly confessed that he owed to him a very great debt of gratitude, one which he hoped to some day repay in some manner.

The scout had also a dim doubt in his mind that after all Dr. Dick might be right as to Wallace Weston being alive, though, when he reviewed all the circumstances, the seeming certainty of his death, he could not but feel that it was strange, how the presentiment that he lived would haunt him.

"What do you say to a look in upon the gamblers, Mr. Cody?" said the doctor, as the two reached the hotel.

"I am willing."

"Then we'll drop in at Larry's Den, my favorite resort."

"Do you gamble?"

"I bet sometimes."

"Well, give me a hundred and I'll play it for you, with as much of my own, for I will win."

"You appear positive."

"I am."

"See if I am not a true prophet."

The scout hesitated an instant, then took out a roll of bills and handed five twenties to the doctor sport.

Then they entered the gambling saloon known as Larry's Den.

It was built of logs, a hundred feet long by sixty in width, about twelve feet high, and with a slanting roof.

There were windows along the sides, two doors of entrance, one on either side, a bar at one end, with a door behind it, and which was kept closed.

A dirt floor, with some score of board tables and benches, completed the furnishing of the place, with the exception of a dozen mining lamps.

The place was crowded with miners, and a cloud of tobacco smoke filled the room, while nearly every one was engaged in gambling, bags of gold dust and nuggets being the stakes played for and recklessly put up on the turn of a card, sometimes a man's month's work going at one sweep.

Landlord Larry was there, at his table in front of the center of the bar, and which was railed in, taking in his commissions, changing money, and keeping the account of sales of liquor and tobacco.

He bowed pleasantly to the doctor and scout as they came in, and a general hush fell for a moment upon the crowd, when a voice called out:

"Three cheers for Dr. Dick and his pard, Buffalo Bill!"

The cheers were given with a vengeance, and the two men raised their hats and walked up to where the landlord sat.

"Do you play, Bill?"

"No, Larry, not to-night."

"Then have a seat here by me, for Doc always gambles."

"Yes, it is my greatest pleasure."



Buffalo Bill took the proffered seat, an honor never before conferred by Landlord Larry, and Dr. Dick slipped into a chair at a table near and began to gamble.

Just then a man came and stood near Buffalo Bill, who, glancing up, recognized Colorado Kit, a man who had put up a fight against Buffalo Bill on his former visit, and who still had both arms in a sling as the result.

"Well, pard, I hope you are feeling better," said Buffalo Bill, pleasantly.

"I'll be all right in time, I guesses. I don't mind it when I gits pinched."

"You certainly take it coolly."

"I takes my medicine when I has ter. Does yer stay long in Last Chance?"

"Some days, I think."

"Well, I has no hard feelings ag'in' yer."

"I sh'u'd hev knowed better than to fool with a buzz-saw," and Colorado Kit walked off, while Larry whispered:

"You must keep your eye on him, Bill, or he will do you. I believe it's a blind, his wearing both hands in a sling."

"No, he was badly hurt, and, do you know, I do not believe he is treacherous; yet I'll be on my guard," and Buffalo Bill glanced over at the table where Dr. Dick was playing, and saw that he was winning steadily.

"That's a way the doctor has."

"Some swears he is a sharp, and cheats, but if he is, no eye has been quick enough to catch him at it, and it would be hard for the man who accused him of playing double—Ah! see there!" and Landlord Larry pointed to the doctor's table, where there was trouble brewing.

## CHAPTER VI.

### AN ACCUSER.

There was certainly trouble over at the doctor's table. One of the miners, and a man known to be a terror, as he himself always said:

"A hard man from Wayback," had suddenly drawn a revolver and covered Dr. Dick.

The hush of death fell upon the scene, and not a man moved in all the room, only gazed at the actors.

The doctor sat unmoved, his face not changing color, and a cigar between his lips.

Upon the table before him were the cards he had just put down, and his left hand rested upon the pile of money taken on the game, and which his cards said he had won.

His right hand also rested upon the table, and there he sat quietly gazing at his antagonist, who was known as the Black Heart desperado.

He did not belie his looks, for his face was pitted with the result of smallpox, his nose was broken, one eyelid was gone, and his whole appearance was as villainous as could well be imagined.

He had one ear slit, as though it had been marked as a reminder of ownership, and a scar was across his left cheek, where a bullet had cut its way.

His shoulders were massive and round, and of powerful build, he was a dangerous man to grapple with, while he was known to be a fatal shot, as several mounds in the Last Chance burying-ground stood as mute reminders.

If any one in the camp liked Black Heart Joe, it was not suspected, and yet all treated him with marked respect.

He owned a paying mine, but hired help to work it, for he never touched pick or shovel himself.

With plenty of money, apparently, he gambled most of the time, and almost invariably played a winning game.

By some strange circumstance he had never before played with the doctor, but had boldly said that it was not phenomenal luck that made Dr. Dick win, but expert handling of more cards than were allowed in a pack.

"Some night I'll play a game with him, and if I catch him cheating, Last Chance will have to advertise for a new doctor," he said.

The opportunity came that night, when Dr. Dick went into Larry's Den with Buffalo Bill.

The doctor was on the hunt for some one to play with, when suddenly Black Heart Joe's partner arose, and said:

"I'm done, for the pocket is empty."

"Find another sucker, Joe."

"Maybe you'll play, Doc?" said Joe, just as Dr. Dick was passing.

"I do not mind, thank you," and he dropped into the chair just vacated.

The money was staked, and the game was begun, and ending, the doctor was winner of several hundreds.

Black Heart Joe said nothing, merely puffed at his pipe and blew volumes of smoke into the face of Dr. Dick, who was smoking a cigar, but paid no attention to the rudeness of his adversary.

Again Dr. Dick won, and so it continued until the fifth game ended and Black Heart Joe had seen raked over to the other side of the table gold and bills amounting to over three thousand dollars.

Then it was that he suddenly drew a revolver and leveled it at the doctor, his elbow resting upon the table, his finger upon the trigger, while he said, in a voice that all could hear:

"See here, my fancy Gold King, I accuses you of playing me."

"Do you mean that I cheat?" coolly asked the doctor.

"Waal, now, I hain't up in Queen Victoria English, but that is just how I intended to express myself."

"Well, you have the drop on me dead sure, so I have a proposition to make."

"Leave that dust jist thar on ther table and make it; but ef yer attempts ter move yer hands, my gun goes off, and everybody knows death follows in ther wake o' my bullet."

"I do not fear you, Black Heart, and I am not afraid to die; but I do not wish to be disgraced by dying by the hands of such as you, and so I have a proposition to make."

The voice of Dr. Dick was subdued, his face calm; his eyes only seemed to show feeling, for they were ablaze with anger.

"Out with it, and quick, for I'm hungry to kill yer."

"You accuse me of cheating?"

"I do."

"In what way?"

"I says you has other cards in yer sleeve, or about yer, and plays 'em at will, for you is a card sharp."

"You has cheated hundreds o' poor miners here, but



yer can't play no fraud game on Black Heart Joe, for I keeps my eyes open."

"So I see," laconically said the doctor, alluding to the lidless eye, and several laughed, which caused the face of Joe to grow black with passion, while he said:

"Laugh away, yer devils; but this are my night fer populatin' graveyards, see if it hain't, when I gits rid o' this Gold Bug."

"My proposition is, that I surrender my weapons to Landlord Larry, and then let Buffalo Bill search me thoroughly."

"If any card is found upon me, I am willing to be taken out by the Vigilantes and hanged."

"If not, then we step ten paces apart, and you answer to me for this insult."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BITER BITTEN.

A murmur of satisfaction followed this proposition of Dr. Dick, but Black Heart Joe responded:

"I'm agreeable ter all except two things."

"Name them."

"In the fu'st place, yer tarns yer weepens over ter my pard, Sam Sully."

"I'll make that compromise for peace."

"Now ther second."

"Name it."

"That I wants my pard Breakneck, to s'arch yer fer extra keerds."

"Why not Buffalo Bill?"

"I won't trust him."

"You will not trust him?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"He'll play inter yer hands."

"See here, Black Heart, I yield to your friend, Sam Sully, though I know him to be a rascal, and I propose an honorable man to search me, instead of your pard Breakneck, who is another of your kind."

"I will yield no more."

"Then I will have ter kill yer fu'st and s'arch yer after."

"Draw trigger, and you die on the instant," and all eyes turned to see that Buffalo Bill had Black Heart Joe covered, and had so placed himself that Sam Sully and Breakneck, who had been pointed out to him by Landlord Larry, were also in range.

Black Heart Joe's face changed color, but he did not take his eye off Dr. Dick, or lower his revolver, while he said:

"See, yer pard is already chippin' in, and has me covered—does yer call that honest, Doc?"

"Certainly, when you accused him of dishonesty, and hold me at your mercy."

"Come, do you accept my proposition, or not, for I can make terms, now, I see, with Cody's aid."

"I does, let him s'arch you."

"Pardon me, but I refuse, as I prefer to keep you and those precious pals of yours under the muzzle of my revolver."

"Let Landlord Larry do the searching."

A cheer went up at these words of Buffalo Bill, who, all now knew, saw through the trick of Black Heart Joe to get out from under the cover of the scout's revolver.

Black Heart Joe was becoming rattled, with the situation he had found himself in, and so he said, quickly:

"Landlord Larry, you do the s'arching, and do it open."

"I've a notion to clip that broken nose of yours, Joe, with a bullet, for insinuating I wouldn't act square; but I won't quarrel with a man on the brink of the grave," and stepping up to the Gold King, Larry continued:

"This is a dirty piece of business, Dr. Dick, for one to be in, but I have often heard hints that you don't play fair, and so I wish to settle the complaints at once, so will give all a chance to see if this man has not lied ag'in' yer."

With this he took off the doctor's belt of arms, and laid them upon the table.

Beneath was a buckskin belt of gold and bills, and this was put on the other.

The velvet coat was then drawn off and searched, and a silk handkerchief alone found in it.

His vest followed, and an elegant watch, diamond-studded, and a chain of massive links were placed on the table.

A small note-book was in the vest, and a penknife, nothing else.

In the pockets of his pants were found a bunch of keys, and a small gold pencil and pen combined, with a diamond set in one end of it.

There was also a roll of bills and a pair of small gold-mounted derringers in the rear pistol-pockets.

The long, handsome boots even were drawn off, and not a sign of a card was found.

The doctor submitted quietly to the indignity, and he felt that all who looked on him were doing him justice.

Black Heart Joe still kept him covered with his revolver, while Buffalo Bill held his weapon covering the doctor's accuser, while he also kept Sam Sully and Breakneck in range.

"I suppose you are satisfied," said Landlord Larry, sternly, turning to Black Heart Joe.

"Well, I dunno that I is," was the answer, and instantly the room seemed full of jeers, at the hissing that followed his words.

Seeing a dangerous demonstration toward him, as shown by the hissing of the crowd, Black Heart said:

"You says I is mistaken, Larry?"

"I do."

"You clears ther Doc, then, of cheatin'?"

"I do, as does every other man in this room, unless they be your two pards there."

"Well, I can only act like a gentleman, and apologize."

"Here, Doc, here's my hand."

Black Heart Joe held out his hand, anxious to square matters, and to get out from under Buffalo Bill's pistol-muzzle.

But Dr. Dick did not take the proffered hand, but said:

"You would find it impossible to act like a gentleman, and as to an apology, I refuse to accept it, while it was not the compact between us."

"What were?"

The revolver had been lowered now, though a quick glance showed that Buffalo Bill had not followed suit in that respect, for Black Heart Joe was still covered.

The doctor coolly put on his coat and vest, resumed his hat, buckled on his money belt, then his weapons, and continued:



"If I am wrong, I am willing to be corrected; but my idea was, that if you failed to convict me of cheating, you were to give me satisfaction, right here in this room."

"Waal, hain't I apologized?"

"I accept no apology from such as you," and Dr. Dick pocketed his winnings, which were on the table.

"You mean fight?"

"Certainly."

"If I raises my gun, that durned scout bores a hole in my head."

"Take off your weapons, and lay them on the table, as I do."

"I'll be murdered."

"No one will harm you, Joe," said the landlord. The Black Heart desperado was cowed.

He had gotten into a scrape, and knew when he had enough.

He glanced appealingly toward his pals, Breakneck and Sam Sully.

They were white-faced and unable to help him.

"Say, Doc, everybody is ag'in' me, 'cause I thought I had caught you cheatin', and you refuse to accept my sorry for it, and wants ter murder me."

"You have the name of being a dead shot, and quick as a cat in your movements."

"Landlord Larry can arrange distance and give the word to fire, so lose no time, for I am losing my temper, and you know you said this was your night to populate graveyards, so start in with me."

"I caves, I does, pard."

A yell went up at this, and Black Heart Joe added:

"I knows when I has bit off more than I kin chew, so let it go at that, Doc."

"No, you and those two pals of yours must leave Last Chance to-night."

"But I has a mine here, and they works it for me."

"Landlord Larry, what is the mine of this man worth?"

"He offered it to me at five thousand cash, doctor, but I was afraid of it at that price."

"I'll pay him that price, and now."

"Landlord Larry, draw up the papers please."

"Does yer mean I has got ter go?"

"I do, and these two men, and the other two who work for you, for I know you to be a bad lot."

"If you do not go, you have got to fight, and if I am not mistaken, when I tell the Vigilantes what I know of you and your hirelings, they will invite you to remain."

"Give me the cash, and I'll go," cried Black Heart Joe, excitedly, casting a quick glance at Buffalo Bill, who no longer had him covered, but kept his eye upon him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE EXILES.

The papers for the sale of the mine of Black Heart Joe to Dr. Dick, were correctly drawn up by Landlord Larry, and duly signed.

Landlord Larry and Buffalo Bill attached their signatures as witnesses, and then the money was paid over, the doctor turning to the landlord and asking him to pay it for him, for one of the advantages of the Last Chance Hotel was that it had a strong room, where the miners could deposit their winnings and gold-finds, and have Larry as banker.

The doctor also banked with Larry, who knew how much he was worth.

"We'll git out, if it's ther desire of ther miners that we goes," said Joe, as he pocketed the money.

"It is my decision, and you have two hours to leave town."

"The store is closed, and we wants our horses shod."

"Landlord Larry will open the store for you to purchase what you wish, and if Blacksmith Ben will shoe your horses to-night, I'll give him fifty dollars for the job."

"What do you say, Ben?" and Dr. Dick turned to a man standing near, who answered:

"I'll go yer, Doc, but they should pay."

"You hear, all of you, so now go, and I warn you not to be within the borders of Last Chance when I go on my rounds in the morning, for I am going to ask the Vigilantes to escort me."

The exiled men well knew what such an escort meant, and they seemed most anxious to get away.

The blacksmith left to shoe their horses, which one of them would lead to the camp, and really they needed little done to them, only they used the horseshoeing as an excuse for delay.

The others filled several packs at the bar and then adjourned to the store, which Larry had opened for them, and where they purchased provisions and other things they needed.

Their next move was to the mine, where each one had a snug little sum hidden away, Joe having been in ignorance of what those he hired were laying up for themselves.

The four men managed to slip away from Joe for a short while, to get their secreted belongings, but when they reached the mine were startled to find some one there, who called out:

"Git! this mine belongs to Dr. Dick, the Gold King, and trespassers is shot dead."

"Light out!"

They groaned in agony of spirit, but obeyed without a second's delay, "lighting out" in a way that showed they were not anxious to tarry there. Blacksmith Ben soon had all their horses in good shape, six in number; upon one was packed their belongings, and mounting, with Joe in the lead, the "Exiles from Last Chance," as Landlord Larry called them, rode down the valley, and at dawn were well out of the range of camps, for they had no desire to have the Vigilantes interview them.

When they had left the den, Dr. Dick was congratulated upon having driven them away, for they were known to be a very bad lot, and many thought that Joe's mine never paid a dollar, but was kept as a blind, while he and his men stole gold from others.

Then, too, Joe's one eye was called a hoo-doo by many, and all were glad to get rid of him and his gang.

"You saved my life, Cody, for that man meant to kill me, when he found that his charge was untrue."

"Let me see, I have just three thousand dollars to split in two with you, for that was the amount of my winning on your hundred and mine," and Dr. Dick handed over the money as the two parted at the hotel door for the night.

The next morning Buffalo Bill was up early, and mounting one of Landlord Larry's horses, so as to allow



his own to rest, he rode out upon the trail of the five exiles.

He knew that a coach was expected in soon, and wished to head it off and have a word with the driver, who was an old friend, Dave Dockery by name.

Six miles out from Last Chance, Buffalo Bill saw the coach.

It was halted, and a number of horsemen were upon either side of it.

Without a moment's hesitation, Buffalo Bill rode forward at full speed.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE CROSS BY THE TRAILSIDE.

The clatter of Buffalo Bill's horse attracted the attention of those about the stage, and looking back they saw who it was that was coming.

At once they rode on, for though they were five to one, they did not care to take any chances with a man of the scout's record, and, besides, they persuaded themselves that he was not alone.

As they got a quarter of a mile from the coach, they saw Dave Dockery draw rein, and the scout halt by the side of his wheelers.

"Well, Dave, you had company just now," said Buffalo Bill.

"Yes, Bill, and it did my heart good to see you, for I recognized you the moment I seen you."

"How are you, old man?" and leaning from his box, Dave grasped the scout's hand warmly.

"All right, thanks, Dave.

"I was told that you were driving on this trail now. You always take the most dangerous runs, Dave."

"Kinder like it, Bill; but what are you doing here?"

"I am out on furlough, and prospecting about here, and wanted to see you. Had those fellows intended to hold you up, Dave?"

"That's just it, I believe they did.

"You see, I recognized them, so didn't get on my guard, and they halted me.

"They said they had sold out in the camps, and was going prospecting; but I seen them making signs at each other, and heard one say, in a whisper:

"It can be done with no risk."

"That put me on my guard, and I believe they were just getting ready to level on me, when they heard hoofs and saw you.

"I'm mighty glad you came, Bill, for I've got a clean thirty thousand aboard in bank money.

"What was up with those fellows?"

"They are exiles from home, Dave, for Dr. Dick gave them advice last night which they followed."

"Sent out for good?"

"Yes."

"That's clever in the Doc, for they are a bad lot. You saved me, Bill, for with six miles start, they would have some hours yet before any one would come out from Last Chance to look me up, and it would be night before any party could start, and then darkness would hide the trail, and they'd never catch 'em.

"Bill, I thank you; but what do you think of Dr. Dick?"

"A brave, handsome fellow, and a man who has seen much, and carries a heart full of troubles, I think."

"Yes, and generous to a fault. I'm stuck on him, Bill."

Dave Dockery drew rein in a little glen, which a stream wound through, and where a wooden cross of cedar stood to mark the spot of a former hold-up.

Buffalo Bill somehow had had a dread that Black Heart Joe and his gang might hold up Dave Dockery, and Landlord Larry had told him there would be big money on board.

He saw the trail of the exiles sticking to the coach road, and so hastened on, and, as Dave had said, saved him from a hold-up, perhaps death, for the men were desperate, expected money was on the coach, and knew that they had every chance to escape.

They had been thwarted, and registered an oath of vengeance against Buffalo Bill.

Upon the cedar cross, erected to mark the spot of a former hold-up in the place where Dave Dockery now drew rein, was painted:

IN MEMORY

OF

BUD BENTON,

DRIVER OF THE OVERLAND COACH

TO

LAST CHANCE,

AND MURDERED HERE WITH TWO OF HIS

PASSENGERS.

*Some Day a Reckoning Will Come.*

"I put it there, Bill, for I liked Bud, and some day it may be my time to go; but I hope before I do I'll get a chance to even up for poor Bud, for I know that there are those who will avenge me," said Dave.

"Stage driving is deadly work, Bill, but I like it, and will take my chances as they come.

"Will you ride on with me?"

"No, and you need not speak of having seen me."

"All right, but it's a shame for you to lose the benefit of what you did for me.

"Let me tell Landlord Larry."

"If you wish, but no one else, for I will tell the doctor what I found his exiles doing. Keep your eyes open, Dave, and report to Landlord Larry; mind you, no one else, all that you discover of a suspicious nature, for I am out for game, although I am on a furlough."

"Man-hunting, eh?"

"About that, Dave."

"Well, you'll get 'em in time.

"I'll see you at the camps, for you know I don't go out for a week. I'm allowed to choose my own days to go and come, so as to throw the road-agents off my trail; but I always tells Larry what day to look for me."

"Yes, and he told me I would meet you—" and with a wave of his hand, Buffalo Bill rode on along the trail after the exiles.

## CHAPTER X.

### A DREAD OF EVIL.

Dave Dockery ran into Last Chance without further adventure, and when Landlord Larry made known that he had brought safely a valuable mail and a large sum



of paper money, there were three cheers given for the gallant driver, and he was urged scores of times to—

"Take suthin', Dave."

But Dave had a cool head, and knew when he had enough, and just when to quit, so did not "get off his base."

He told Landlord Larry of meeting Black Heart Joe and his gang, and his belief that they intended to rob him, and that Buffalo Bill, believing that they had held him up, rode to the rescue, not counting odds against him.

"I've a mind to start Dr. Dick and the Vigilantes on their trail, and that would mean tree fruit, Dave."

"You know, or at least I'll tell you, that Dr. Dick is captain of the Vigilantes now."

"He is?" surprisedly.

"Yes, he was elected at the last secret meeting in my place, for I had all I could do here."

"Nobody knows just who the Vigilantes are?"

"No, Dave; and you must not tell; but I let you know in case you may have to call on them some day when I am not about."

"I'll keep the secret, Larry."

"There are just twenty-five of them, and they go masked, you know, wear black gowns, red masks, and cover their horses up, head and body, saddle, bridle and all, with red calico, so nobody knows them, or the animals they ride."

"It's a great thing, for that keeps down the bad element, and you have got it in Last Chance about as bad as any place I know, Larry."

"You bet we have! But do you know Dr. Dick has done much to keep back the bad men, for they don't understand him, what he is, or what he means."

"You see, he came here a mysterious man, and he is more of a mystery now than ever, and the bad men are afraid of him."

"You should have seen him last night, when he was under Black Heart Joe's gun."

"Why, he was as cool as ice in San Francisco Mountains, and don't you forget it! All of us thought he was gone."

"What saved him?"

"His nerve, for one, and Buffalo Bill for two."

"If Buffalo Bill shot, toes turned up, though he don't draw trigger unless he has to."

"He didn't last night, but he cowed the Black Heart, and held him so until matters was arranged satisfactory all round."

"You see, the result was Black Heart took a journey, and his four miners concluded to go with him to keep him out of trouble."

"Or themselves; but Buffalo Bill didn't tell me of this."

"Buffalo Bill is as modest as a woman at her first love-talk, when he is in it where blood may be drawn."

"Well, Bill has got to keep his eyes open."

"I'm a-thinking that Joe will give Bill trouble when he goes."

"Maybe."

"Were is Bill now?"

"Off on some trail, and he don't go wrong, you may gamble on that."

"Well, I'm awful glad he come, and, as he won't say

a word about what he has done, I'm going to write a letter to the commandant and tell him the whole story."

"That is right, and I'll sign it that he saved me from turning up my toes, and the boodle I had along."

"It's a good idea; but here comes the Doc."

Just then Dr. Dick entered.

He had been on his round of professional calls, for he never neglected any miner, however poor he was, or if only a trifle ill.

He greeted Dave pleasantly, and asked about Buffalo Bill.

"Do you say he started out on the stage trail this morning, Larry?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"He said he would prospect a little."

Dave did not say a word about having met the scout, and Landlord Larry, having been told Buffalo Bill's wish, also kept silent.

"Well, I don't half like that, for I am sure there are men here who fear Buffalo Bill enough to pick him out of his saddle, when they cannot be found out."

"I'll take a ride along the stage trail myself," and Dr. Dick went to the stable, mounted a fine horse, stopped at his cabin, and, throwing a repeating rifle across his saddle, rode out of the camp at a gallop.

## CHAPTER XI.

### A GRUESOME TOY.

Dr. Dick, once out of the camps, and where he might meet any miners, rode forward at a sweeping gallop.

He kept his pace until he reached the scene where Bud Benton had been killed, and there he drew rein suddenly.

The cause of this was at discovering a man standing by the cross that marked the fatal spot.

In the shadows of the timber he had not recognized that the man was Buffalo Bill.

"Ho, doctor, what is your hurry?"

"Ah, Cody, I was on the hunt for you."

"Anything wrong?"

"No more than Landlord Larry said that you had gone out on this trail this morning, and I feared you might have gotten into an ambush."

"Oh, no; from this Black Heart desperado, you mean?"

"Yes, and others, for with the evil element in Last Chance you are not popular."

"That I take as a compliment."

"It is; but I did not know but that you might have gotten into trouble, so rode out to see."

"I thank you, doctor, but I am all right. Did Dave get in safe?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"I am glad of that."

"You saw him?"

"Yes."

"He did not speak of it."

"We were together for a little while only, and then I went along on the trail."

"After Black Heart?"

"Yes."

"Have they kept on?"



"Yes, I followed them to their noon camp, and after a short rest they went on."

"We are done with them, then."

"I hope so, doctor."

"Here is where poor Bud Benton was killed."

"And the two passengers, I see," and Buffalo Bill glanced on the inscription on the cross.

"Yes, it was a red piece of work; but let me tell you in confidence, Cody, that I am captain now of the Vigilantes."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I was elected in Landlord Larry's place, who resigned."

"I am glad to hear it."

"You know, here the Vigilantes are a secret body of men, and I have twenty-four under me."

"They are enough?"

"Especially when it is not known what our strength is, and also a secret as to who we are."

"That is it."

"Yes, we turn out only when there is reason for it, and then go masked, wear long gowns, like dominos, and even our horses are completely covered."

"That makes you stronger in the eyes of the miners, and more feared."

"So I thought, for it was my idea to have it so."

"Well, you will not be long in getting rid of your worst characters in Last Chance, and then the camps will build up; but as it is now outsiders are afraid to come here."

"We will do our best; but shall we return?"

"I am ready, and yet I would prefer to ride in after dark, for I do not care to have the miners think I was trailing Black Heart Joe and his men."

"All right; we'll go slow, and that will fetch us in after dark."

"Then we will have supper, and I have a proposition to make to you."

"I will be glad to hear it, doctor."

Two hours after the two men were seated in the doctor's cabin, having had supper, and were enjoying their cigars.

Suddenly Dr. Dick said:

"Cody, I am a natural-born gambler, and I told you I had a proposition to make to you?"

"Yes."

"You bought an interest in the Gilt Edge Mine yesterday?"

"Yes."

"For yourself?"

"Yes, and a few shares for some officers at the fort."

"Well, you won fifteen hundred last night?"

"Rather, you did, for me."

"It is the same thing."

"Well?"

"Now, if you will put up your share in the Gilt Edge, and your fifteen hundred, up against three thousand in cash, I'll throw you to win or lose."

"It is against my nature to back down, doctor, so I'll go you," assented the scout, with a smile.

The doctor took a box from a shelf, and placing it upon the table, said:

"These are my luck dice—see, they are of solid gold, and the spots are made with diamonds."

Buffalo Bill examined the four dice with evident relish.

He saw that they were of solid gold, and each one had diamonds for the spots, eighteen in all, and the four represented seventy-two precious stones, a half carat each.

"These are pretty toys, and worth a snug sum, which you seem to throw about very recklessly, doctor."

"Yes, they are worth, with the box, two thousand dollars—look at the box."

Buffalo Bill took it up, and saw that it was a tiny human skull, rimmed around the lower part with a gold band, and hollowed out so as to hold the dice.

"Rather a gruesome toy after all, doctor."

"Yes, but it is a weird fancy of mine; I picked the skull up on the prairie, and had it made into a dice-box in San Francisco, while the diamonds I secured when our ship touched on the African coast, and the gold I dug out of a mine in Mexico."

"Try your luck, for there are my three thousand," and the doctor put the money on the table.

"I warn you that I am lucky."

"So am I. Throw three times, and the greatest number wins."

Buffalo Bill placed the paper representing his share in the Gilt Edge Mine on the table, with the fifteen hundred won for him by the doctor, and putting the dice in the weird box, prepared to try his luck.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A TEST OF LUCK.

"Let us alternate the throws," said Dr. Dick, as Buffalo Bill held the grim box, about to throw the dice.

"As you please, doctor; but remember, I am lucky."

"So am I, and I'll chance my luck as a test against yours," was the reply.

Buffalo Bill shook the dice in the box, threw, raised the tiny skull, and said, simply:

"Four sixes—twenty-four."

"It could not be better."

"Now look for the same."

"Four sixes," said Buffalo Bill, as the doctor raised the skull.

"Even so far."

"Yes."

"Throw again."

Buffalo Bill did so, and, raising the box, he said:

"Four fives—twenty, and twenty-four are forty-four."

Again the doctor threw, and this time was revealed as before, a tie.

"Remarkable," said Buffalo Bill, with increasing interest, and he prepared to throw again.

Throwing, he continued:

"Two trays and deuces—ten, and to forty-four, fifty-four."

"You'll win, doctor."

Dr. Dick smiled, and threw the dice.

"Two fours and two aces—ten," he said, eagerly.

"A tie," was Buffalo Bill's remark, and he laughed.

But the doctor seemed most deeply interested in the test of luck, and said:

"Let us throw to break the tie."



"Well, shall I throw first again?"

"No, I will."

The doctor threw the dice again, hesitated before he raised the box, and then did so quickly.

"Three sixes and a five," he said, adding:

"Can you beat it, Cody?"

"I'll tell you later," was the smiling response, and Buffalo Bill shook the diamond-studded gold dice in their grim box and threw.

He, too, raised the box slowly, for he was a poor man in those days, and what he had put into the Gilt Edge Mine for a third share had represented his savings for over a year.

If he won this time, he still had his share, got back the fifteen hundred won for him the evening before, by Dr. Dick, and received three thousand besides, a nice little fortune indeed for the famous chief of scouts, who already had begun to figure on the fine little fortune he would have to put aside for a rainy day, and bad weather is a very frequent incident in a borderman's life.

He was perfectly cool, for he had as complete control of his nerves as a professional gambler, and could not but observe that the notably cool Dr. Dick was a trifle nervous as he glanced to see his throwing.

"Four sixes," said Buffalo Bill, with no show of excitement in his tone.

"Yes, I am beaten by one only.

"You are indeed lucky, Mr. Cody," and the gambler doctor laughed, though not as though he enjoyed it.

"See here, Dr. Dick!"

"Well?"

"Last night I happened to be of service to you, and I believe you put the job up to try and repay me in some way. Is that so? for if I thought so I'd call it off," and the scout spoke warmly.

"No, Cody, the throwing of those dice was a square deal, an honest test of luck. You won by a spot——"

"A diamond."

"Yes, so it was a close call, and it is the first time the box and diamond-studded squares ever failed me, and I never keep anything that plays me false, while, as they brought you luck, please accept box and dice with my compliments."

"No, I cannot think of such a thing."

"Then I shall throw them in the creek, for, as I said, I never cling to anything that once fails me.

"Do you know, if I miss with a revolver I give it away; if a horse falls with me I never ride him again; if I lose in a game of cards I never play with the same pack again—in fact, I am as superstitious as a negro, for if I see a rat in the morning I never make a bet that day; if I meet a cross-eyed man, or one who is deformed, I cross myself to destroy the hoodoo; always put my right sock and boot on first, never step across a grave, or walk around at the head of a corpse—in real earnestness, I am a believer in signs, sounds and prognostications at all times; take the box as a souvenir of a fool, for I am one, yet with the best wishes of your humble servant, Dr. Dick."

After this remarkable dissertation of his superstition, Dr. Dick handed the grim box and dice over to Buffalo Bill, adding:

"There is bad luck in it henceforth for me, good for you; take it."

"Thank you, I will, now you put it so strongly as you do, and I'll appreciate it and keep it as a souvenir of the most remarkable man I ever met, or expect to cross the trail of again," and Buffalo Bill held out his hand and grasped that of the gold king.\*

The money won by the scout, and the strange souvenir, were wrapped up and taken to the hotel to be put in Landlord Larry's strong room until he left, and then Dr. Dick said:

"Now, come over and see that I do not lose a bet to-night, Cody."

The scout accompanied the doctor to Larry's den, and it turned out just as he said, that he won every game, and there was not one present to bring forward the charge of cheating on account of his phenomenal luck.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE RETURN TRAIL.

Appearing as though he intended remaining at Last Chance Mine for some days, Buffalo Bill decided to make a start for Fort Faraway, where his post was situated although his furlough was not yet expired.

One of his reasons for this was, that he had discovered a deserter in the army—a man named Roger Plum—among the miners at Last Chance. Immediately when he saw him, the great scout recognized him as a deserter from the army, whom he had instructions to capture at the first opportunity, and although he was on furlough Buffalo Bill never took that fact into consideration.

He considered that he was bound to serve the United States Government in any way he could, whether he was on furlough or not, and he considered it his duty to make a prisoner of any man the government wanted, wherever or whenever he found him.

And so, one fine morning, Roger Plum found himself gazing into the barrel of Buffalo Bill's six-shooter, and a few moments later securely tied up with rawhide thongs.

Roger Plum, was a great friend of Joe, the Black Heart desperado, and the other four individuals who had been railroaded out of the settlement with him.

Buffalo Bill knew this well, and thinking that Black Heart Joe and his followers might still be in the vicinity of Last Chance, and might attempt a rescue, resolved to get his prisoner back to Fort Faraway as quickly as possible.

He had secured two horses from Landlord Larry, fine animals, that would stand the long trail, one for his prisoner to ride, the other for the outfit of bedding and provisions.

After a visit to the den at night, Buffalo Bill said good-night, and left the miners there all gambling.

He had already said good-by to Landlord Larry and Dr. Dick, and so parted with them with a nod.

Going to the hotel, he told the clerk that he was ready to go, and he was handed over his money and the souvenir given him by Dr. Dick, along with the weapons belonging to his prisoner.

The horses were then saddled, the outfit packed on the

\*Buffalo Bill still has the remarkable souvenir, one of his most valued collection in his elegant prairie home of Scout's Rest Ranch, where it shares a place with the gifts of queens, emperors, kings, princes, famous men and dear friends.—The Author.



third animal, and the prisoner was led out and ordered to mount, as soon as Buffalo Bill had thrust a gag into his mouth and manacled his hands behind his back.

His feet were then connected with chained manacles beneath the horse, and with a word of farewell to the clerk, Buffalo Bill, holding the lines of his prisoner's horse, and the other animal, rode silently away in the darkness.

He had to go down the canyon into the valley, then along the stage trail for a couple of miles, when he branched off, making his own trail, by knowledge of the country and the skill of his woodcraft.

After leaving the last cabin behind, the scout halted and said:

"I have no desire to punish you, Plum, but I had no desire to have you call for aid and cause me to take life in protecting you, so I gagged you as a means of safety, and to save your life, for I would have killed you before you should escape from me.

"Now, I will free you of the gag, and also unlock the manacles upon your hands, but those on your feet must remain."

He removed the gag as he spoke, then the wrist manacles, and mounting, rode on, the prisoner not having spoken.

He was just about twenty miles from Last Chance, when, as the eastern sky was growing gray, he rode into a small canyon and went into camp.

He staked out the horses, after watering them, and, spreading his blankets, lay down by the side of his prisoner, who still maintained a dead silence.

After several hours' sleep, he arose, built a fire and cooked breakfast for both, remarking:

"I suppose you have lost your tongue, Roger, but your teeth are in good condition for a venison steak!"

"You bet they are!"

"Ah! I thought you had been struck speechless, and that you were playing for a candidate for the deaf and dumb asylum."

"No, I can talk."

"All right, try and make up your mind to help me all you can in the long trail before us, for we may have a brush with the Indians, and your scalp is as dear to you as mine, I guess."

"A man's life dear to him, when he is under the shadow of the gallows," sneered the prisoner.

"I do not know how to answer you, except to tell you that once, at the hanging of two Irishmen, a bull broke out of a neighboring pasture and began to toss the people about, when one of the condemned men said to the other:

"'Bedad, Pat, but it's a good thing for us we are afther being up here, safe out of harums way.'"

"Faith and it is that same, Mike," answered the other."

Roger laughed at the story, and Buffalo Bill went on to say:

"Now, pard, you know that as an officer of the government I am only doing my duty in arresting you. I feel sorry for you, but yet I must do my duty, and if you will look at it so, we will get along all right."

"Trust me by taking my irons off and I'll do all you wish."

"No, I cannot do that—will not—so it is useless to ask it."

"How much is it worth to you, Bill Cody, to set me free?"

"The knowledge that I will have done my duty in taking you into camp."

"To be hanged."

"You should have thought of the consequences before you deserted, and stole from your brother soldiers."

"But it is no use to discuss your deeds, so let us get along peaceably."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### CAUGHT IN A DEADLY PLOT.

Roger Plum was silent again for some moments, after what Buffalo Bill said, and went on eating his breakfast.

At last, as though he had made up his mind as to what he would do, he got up and aided the scout in washing up the dishes and setting things to rights for the start.

The chain connecting his feet was eighteen inches in length, so that he could move about readily.

When they mounted again, Buffalo Bill once more made the manacles fast under the horse, and led the way as before.

They pushed on until near sunset, when, coming to a good place to camp, Buffalo Bill said:

"Well, Roger, we have made about fifty miles our first day out, so we will camp here by this stream, for we could not get a better place, and I know of no other near."

"You are a good trailer, Buffalo Bill."

"What makes you think so?"

"I have been watching you, and you have been going as the crow flies, except to turn out where we could not pass."

"I wish to strike the old Mormon trail up into the country where the fort is located, where I am taking you."

"Where is that?"

"To Fort Faraway."

"Why do you take me there?"

"It is a new military post, and your regiment is there, or rather a part of it, under your commander."

"That is where you are stationed?"

"Yes."

"I suppose they will hang me?"

"They will try you first; but do not let us talk of that. We'll wait until the time comes, then worry—don't cross a bridge before you get to it, is my motto."

"Let me settle one thing with you."

"Go ahead."

"I'll feel better then."

"All right. What is it?"

"You are a poor man."

"Am I?" and the scout recalled that he was considerably better off than when he had gone to Last Chance.

"Are you not?"

"I am not a millionaire, by any means, or the photograph of one."

"Well, I am."

"You?"

"Yes; I myself!"

"In your mind."

"No, in reality."

"What, when you were working for about five dollars a day when I lit down upon you?"



"Still I am a millionaire."

"I can't be the judge, for I have no millionaires as intimate, everyday friends."

"Well, I have got a mine that will make us both rich."

"Where is it?"

"I will take you to it, if you will promise, when I show you my find, that you will let me go, saying that I escaped from you when you were asleep."

"And more, I will share it with you squarely."

"See here, Roger, if you really had such a mine, you could not tempt me to go back on my duty, and let me tell you now, when you escape from me it will be when I am asleep—yes, the sleep of death—so just dismiss that idea from your mind."

The prisoner sighed, but at once threw off his look of melancholy, and said:

"All right, you have missed it; but I'll be no trouble to you now, Bill, and help all I can. I'll make the coffee."

"No, I am too good a cook to let you do that, and I am not proud. You unsaddle the horses and stake them out, but don't range out of reach of my rifle, or you will hear it calling you back to supper."

"You are afraid I would put poison in the coffee."

"I believe that is just what you intended to do, for with my toes turned up what a picnic you would have—by Jupiter! but I will search you."

The man attempted to resist, but the revolver of Buffalo Bill looked him squarely in the eyes.

"Hands up!"

The command was sternly uttered and promptly obeyed.

Instantly the manacles were put on the wrists, and mounting his horse, Buffalo Bill ran a lariat through them, tossed it over the limb of a tree, and drew the man upward until his toes only touched the ground.

Then he proceeded deliberately to search him.

In an inner pocket in one bootleg he found a small parcel wrapped in rubber cloth.

Opening it, he took out a paper envelope in tinfoil, and upon the back of this was printed:

"DEADLY POISON."

"Well, Plum, that was a lucky escape for me; but I'll make a thorough search while I am about it," and the scout did not desist in searching the prisoner until he was convinced that he had nothing else concealed.

The search resulted in the finding of a small dirk-knife, also in his boot, a derringer, a roll of money amounting to over a thousand dollars, several hundred in gold in a buckskin bag, some letters in an old leather wallet, and his pipe.

"I'll keep them, and turn them over to the commandant," said Buffalo Bill, and he added:

"Now, sir, unsaddle those horses and stake them out to feed, but beware and do not go out of my sight, for I am not in the best of humor with you."

The prisoner muttered an invective, but obeyed, and, returning to the campfire soon after, sat down and moodily watched the scout prepare supper for both of them.

## CHAPTER XV.

### AN AMBUSH.

Buffalo Bill was angry, as he had reason to be, but he prepared supper, and, helping his prisoner bountifully, said:

"There was no need to be in a bad humor, Roger, so we'll forget what happened, and I know you will not blame me for watching you as I would a snake."

"Come, eat your supper, and enjoy it."

Roger, however, had the blues. He had been thwarted in his plot to kill, and was now defenseless, so could not shake off readily his sore disappointment.

He ate his supper in silence, smoked his pipe and turned in.

Then Buffalo Bill tied the lariat to his manacles, so that he could not easily escape, and went to have a look at the horses.

He changed them to another grazing ground, after watering them, staked them out securely, and, returning to his camp, found that had he not gotten back when he did his prisoner would have freed himself of the lasso, and gotten away in the darkness.

It would have been hard work for him, chained as he was; but had he gotten hold of his weapons he could have shot the scout as he came back, or in the night, when he was asleep by his side.

"You will have it so, Plum, that I must treat you severely; so do not blame me."

"Do not iron me, and I'll do no more toward escaping," pleaded the man, piteously.

"All right, your feet are ironed, and it's man to man, so I'll not be hard upon you; but remember, like the great Napoleon, I sleep with one eye open," and Buffalo Bill laid down by his prisoner.

He pretended to go to sleep, yet did not.

He felt the man, whose back was toward him, slowly move a few inches.

Then he lay still, to move again after five minutes.

This was kept up, until he stretched out one hand and moved it about.

The scout lay perfectly still.

Whatever the movement meant, the prisoner then shoved back into his former position, and said, sleepily:

"I am tired of lying upon my right side—will you turn over?"

Buffalo Bill did so, in a half-asleep manner.

Then the prisoner turned, and was quiet.

For a few moments Buffalo Bill remained as still as death, but suddenly, with a quick turn, he confronted the prisoner, grasped his right hand, and dragged from it a rock as large as a brick.

"Oh, curse you, Buffalo Bill!" groaned the prisoner.

"Because I don't wish to have you crush my head in with that stone?"

"Now I know you, Roger Plum, and I shall show you no mercy from now on, as far as your comfort goes."

"Hold out your hands!"

"I will not."

"If you do not, I shall tie you to that tree all night."

The prisoner obeyed, sullenly.

The hands were manacled, and the lariat bound them to the chain on the feet.

"Now get to sleep, for you will need it, as we have a long ride to-morrow to reach the Mormon Trail, where I shall camp."

Plum uttered a vicious oath, but the scout did not reply, and sunk to sleep, though he had been so trained in his



long life upon the border that he would awake at the slightest sound or movement.

Finding himself outwitted, the prisoner also went to sleep, though in a mood that betokened wicked dreams.

After a refreshing sleep, Buffalo Bill awoke at day-break, built a fire, cooked breakfast and packed away the things without asking the aid of the prisoner, who sat by and moped, though he did not neglect to eat his breakfast.

Mounting, they rode on, the prisoner's hands being again mercifully released from the irons, though his feet were kept chained together.

A halt of an hour was made at noon, and again the trail was taken for the night camp.

The sun was an hour high when the scout and his prisoner turned into the old Mormon Trail, running up into Utah from New Mexico, and by the way of Lee's Ferry across the Colorado Grande.

Going along this for several miles, and in a country somewhat known to him, Buffalo Bill made for a large spring up in a swale between two large hills.

He knew that there was good grass there, the purest of water, plenty of wood, and it was a camp which could only be approached from the front, down the canyon, as the high sides were precipitous, and the canyon ended against a lofty cliff.

"We can make our camp in the center of the canyon, and turn the horses loose above us, so they cannot stray by."

"I camped here on my way to Last Chance," said the scout.

"I wish you had died here," growled the prisoner.

"But I didn't," was the smiling reply.

But just as the words left the lips of the scout, there came several rifle shots from among the rocks on one side, and down went the horse ridden by Buffalo Bill, and the pack animal also, while the one ridden by the prisoner pulled back hard to free himself from the lasso which held him to Cody's saddle.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### A CLOSE CALL.

So unexpected was the volley from among the bowlders on the side of the hill, near the mouth of the canyon, when Buffalo Bill was guiding the way to a night camp, that the scout was caught completely off his guard.

He knew that he was in a country where Indians seldom, if ever, penetrate, from their dread of the "Evil Spirits' Hunting Grounds," as they called the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, and white men, not even his scouts, cared to venture there.

Unlooking for an attack, his horse fell dead before he could extricate himself from the saddle, and, tangled in the lead line of the packhorse, his leg was caught under the animal he rode, and pinned there.

At the same time, the pack horse reared and fell, being mortally wounded, and very nearly crushed him beneath his weight.

But, taken at a disadvantage as was the scout, his presence of mind did not desert him.

He sought to prevent the running off of his prisoner, whose horse was not hurt, and at the same time defend himself as best he could.

Drawing his revolver, he called out:

"Roger, I'll kill you if you make your horse break loose."

This quieted the efforts of the prisoner to escape, for he had at once urged his horse to break away from the lariat, and was trying to free it from about his neck.

But the eyes of the prostrate scout then turned upon his foes, and he beheld several men moving toward him down the hill, and with their rifles in hand.

One of these he recognized, and at once his revolver cracked.

Down went the man, rolling over dead, the bullet having pierced his brain, while the others sprung for cover, and a voice shouted:

"We've got you foul, Buffalo Bill, so hands up or we will kill you."

"Surrender and we'll spare your life, for it's your prisoner and yer boodle we're after."

"I know you, Black Heart Joe, and if you want my prisoner and my money, come and rob me," was the bold reply of Buffalo Bill, and a bullet from his revolver struck the top of the rock just where Black Heart Joe had peered over an instant before.

The shot was answered by several rifles, the bullets cutting so near to the scout that he felt that they did not much care whether they killed him or not, while one whirling by Plum's head caused him to call out:

"For God's sake, Joe, don't fire again, or you will kill me."

What the result would have been the scout could not guess, though he was slowly working his leg out from beneath his horse, when suddenly down the valley came the ringing notes of a bugle.

The effect was electrical, for Buffalo Bill uttered his wild, terrible warcry, while shouts of alarm were heard from the Black Heart desperado and his companions, who started at full speed up the hill, to seek a spot where cavalry could not follow them.

"Great God! we will have to leave our horses!" shouted Joe, as he bounded forward, Sam Sully near him.

Then, from afar off, among the *pinon* trees, came a puff of smoke, and Sam Sully staggered, fell, rose, and falling to his knees, cried piteously:

"Don't leave me, Joe!"

But in vain the appeal, for Black Heart Joe's terror was great, the shot that brought down Sam Sully added wings to his feet, for Breakneck lay down the hill dead from a bullet from Buffalo Bill's revolver.

With a loud, wild cry Sam Sully fell forward and lay motionless, and the scout opened a rapid fire, while several shots came from among the *pinons*, and once more, following them, rung out the bugle notes.

Then came the loud command:

"Come, men, come! or they will escape!"

There was the clatter of hoofs now, and out from the *pinons* dashed a horseman, rifle in hand.

He charged by Buffalo Bill like the wind, and bounded on up the hill, sending his bullets flying ahead of him.

But Black Heart Joe, with his two companions, had reached the top of the ridge now, clambering up rocks a horse could not go over, and then running like frightened coyotes down the range on the other side, hunting for the heavy timber.



A wild war-cry came from the lips of the horseman, as he sprang from his saddle, and, climbing up to the top of the range, rattled out half-a-dozen shots from his repeating rifle after the fugitives, who were frightened half out of their wits.

Again, from the top of the ridge, he gave the bugle-notes, commanding a charge, and vigor was added to the panting, flying men, who supposed a troop of cavalry was in pursuit.

Gaining the shelter of the timber, the three men slackened their speed a little, for their tongues were protruding from between their teeth, their eyes were sunken, and they could not stand that killing pace much longer.

Coming upon a small stream, they halted, thrust their heads deep into the water, filled their canteens, and sped on, Joe at last finding breath to say:

"Thank Heaven, we've got our provisions, canteens and weapons with us, and, night coming on soon, we can escape."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MYSTERIOUS RESCUER.

Seated upon his horse, held by a lariat to Buffalo Bill's saddle, his feet chained beneath the animal, Plum, the prisoner, had been an excited observer of all that had happened.

He saw Buffalo Bill bring down Breakneck with a deadly shot, he heard the bugle call, saw the shot drop Sam Sully to his knees, heard his piteous cry not to be deserted, saw him fall upon his face, and beheld a single horseman dash out from among the *pinons*.

The prisoner then gave up all hope, for he knew that Black Heart and his companions would never stop running as long as they could hold up the pace, which would have been a winner in a footrace across country.

Then the eye of the prisoner turned toward the single horseman, and saw him fly by and on up the hill.

He beheld him leap from his saddle and continue on foot; heard his shots and the bugle call, and then watched him coming back.

Buffalo Bill meanwhile had been striving hard to extricate his leg, and, at last being successful, rose to his feet, with the remark:

"A close call that, Roger, but I am still alive, and you did not get away."

"Satan is your patron saint, Buffalo Bill!"

"Thanks; but where are the troopers, and who is that horseman?"

"There are no troopers, for I saw that man place his hands to his lips and imitate the bugle call."

"He's a dandy, then; but I guess you are right, for no troopers have come in sight, and here he comes alone."

The man came forward at an easy canter, and, as he rode up, said, politely:

"Pardon my not stopping to help you, sir, as I went by; but I had started those fellows running, and wished to encourage them to keep it up."

"I think you did help me, sir, and to the extent of saving my life, for those devils meant to kill me, to settle a score they had charged to me."

"But have we not met before?" and Buffalo Bill gazed fixedly at the man before him.

He was a man of fine physique, though he stooped in

the shoulders, wore his dark hair and beard long, and spectacles shaded his eyes.

He had a slouch hat, the rim of which hung down over his ears, and his general appearance was that of one who had been a long time away from civilization.

His horse was a good one, but rough-hided, and his saddle and weapons were weather-worn.

"My name is Andrew Seldon, sir. I may call myself the Hermit of the Grand Canyon, for I make my home in the wilderness—in fact, I am a prospector, so now you know all there is to tell you of myself.

"May I ask your name, please?"

"I am better known on the border by the name of Buffalo Bill than by that which I own to as William Cody."

"Indeed! you are the famous scout and Indian fighter, Buffalo Bill, of whom I have often heard!

"I am glad to have served you, sir; indeed I am!"

"With your cavalry," said Buffalo Bill, with a smile.

"I am an imitator, sir, and can mimic a bugle call fairly well—at least, it served the purpose on this occasion."

"Just as well as a troop of cavalry would have done."

"Do you think these fellows have stopped running yet?" and the scout laughed.

"Hardly; but your comrade I now note is a prisoner?"

"Yes, a deserter from the army, whom I captured in Last Chance Mining Camp, and am taking to Fort Faraway with me.

"Those men were from Last Chance also, and were driven out of there by Dr. Dick, a noted character of the mines, and I had a hand in helping him.

"They knew I had this prisoner, so came to the Mormon Trail, feeling certain I would camp here, and they would then rescue him.

"But for you, sir, they would have done so."

"Yes; I saw them from a distance, and, not liking their looks, went into hiding.

"I saw you pass, and, as soon as I could, followed, fearing an ambush for you."

"And how to show my gratitude I do not know."

"By not mentioning it."

"Do you hunt about here?"

"No, I am on my way to Wingate, to purchase supplies to last me through the winter."

"And you expect to winter over on the canyon?"

"Oh, yes."

"Alone?"

"No; I have a companion with me, and, if we get rich, you may hear of us again; but now I must be off, for I wish to get back as soon as possible."

"You surely will camp with me to-night?"

"Thank you, but I must decline, for I cannot lose a day, and I have a long ride before me, as you must know, as I expect to lead a couple of pack horses back I will have to travel slow."

"But you must camp somewhere?"

"Not until after midnight; therefore, I'll say good-by, and will ask you to kindly bury that man I had to lay out."

"Certainly, I will; but why not go with me to Fort Faraway, since it is nearer for you?"

"A rougher trail, though; and I have acquaintances at Wingate."

"And may have at Faraway."



"No, I have no friends at Faraway, I am sure."

"Well, Mr. Seldon, I am sorry to see you leave me, but I hope to meet you again some time, for I have an idea of scouting along the rim of the Grand Canyon some day."

"Then we may meet again, but now I must go."

"One moment, please," earnestly said the scout.

"Yes."

"I wish to ask you an important question, one you may answer or not, as you please. But, come one side, for I do not care to have that fellow hear me," and Buffalo Bill led the way to a spot some paces distant.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE CAMP IN THE CANYON.

"I wish to say," and Buffalo Bill spoke impressively, "that on my way to Last Chance mines, I scouted down to the vicinity of the Grand Canyon, and at a point some forty or fifty miles from here came upon a deserted camp."

"Yes," and the man did not change color.

"The camp had been deserted some months, and I judged by what I saw that three men had camped there, as many horses and a dog."

"Yes."

"Not far from the camp, on the bank of a stream, just at the base of a large, quaking aspen tree, was a grave."

"Yes."

"Cut into the tree was an inscription, having a name, that of Hugh Mayhew, *alias* Black Bill."

"Yes."

The stranger still answered only with the affirmative, his countenance not changing in the least.

"Now, Mr. Seldon, what I wish to ask you is, if you know anything about that camp?"

"I do, decidedly."

"And the grave?"

"I dug it."

"And the man?"

"Black Bill?"

"Yes."

"I killed him."

"You did?" in astonishment.

"I did," with decision.

There was not the first sign of emotion, or of triumph, in the man's reply.

"Why did you kill him, may I ask?"

"He wronged me cruelly, as the lines in the tree state, and he was about to kill a comrade to whom he owed his life."

"I was fortunate to be on hand to rescue him, his comrade, as I was in your case, and in a fair fight with Black Bill I killed him."

"Then I buried him, and his comrade is now mine, the one I speak of who anxiously awaits my return."

"We went on our way, and left him in his grave."

"That is all I have to tell, or care to, Mr. Cody, for such I believe you said your name is, besides Buffalo Bill."

"Yes, and I thank you, sir, for your explanation clears up a mystery of that deserted camp, and which I am glad to fathom."

"As you seem determined to go on, Mr. Seldon, I will

not detain you; but is there nothing I can do for you, as I am well supplied with provisions, ammunition, yes, and horses, for those fellows left their animals up the canyon, thus cutting themselves off from them in their flight."

"There is nothing that you can do for me, thank you, Mr. Cody—good-by; but, as I said, some day we may meet again."

He grasped the scout's hand, and, after riding off a few paces, halted, and called back:

"Be careful not to trust your prisoner, for he has as evil a countenance as I ever saw."

"Thanks for the warning; but you read him aright, for he has already shown what he is capable of," and the scout waved his hand, while he mused to himself.

"Somewhere I have met that man before, or some one strangely like him."

"Who is it that he reminds me of, and whom I cannot recall?"

"Well, I'll give it up now, for there is work to be done."

Convinced that the three men had stampeded for good, and would not dare return, Buffalo Bill took the saddle and bridle off his dead horse, and the pack also.

"Here, Plum, I'll unchain you, so I can make your horse carry the pack up into the canyon, and you lead him there, while I bring my traps."

In a few minutes they started, and in a secluded break among the rocks, near the spring, Buffalo Bill made his camp.

Telling his prisoner to gather wood, and knowing he could not escape with his manacles on, the scout took two of the horses belonging to Black Heart Joe and his men back to where the bodies of Sam Sully and Breakneck lay.

Blindfolding the animals,\* the scout placed the bodies across them and led them back to camp.

"What did yer bring those stiffs here for, to haunt us all night?" said Plum, sullenly.

"I do not care to leave them where they fell, to be devoured by coyotes, even though they did attempt my life."

"You are mighty merciful toward the dead."

"Yes; they cannot care for themselves."

"Can I have what they has got on 'em?"

"No; you will not need it," was the suggestive response.

Buffalo Bill then led the horses up to good grazing, the prisoner's horse, as well, brought back an armful of wood, and soon had a cheerful fire burning.

The traps of the fugitive miners, that is, their saddles, bridles and the things on the pack saddle, he brought to his camp, remarking, as he did so:

"Well, we lost two horses, but got six in return, though I would not have given my old comrade for all of them, as we have been on many a trail together."

"What are you looking at?"

"I thought I saw Breakneck move."

"Nonsense, for my bullet went through his head."

"You are nervous, that is all, because night is coming on."

"Come, stir about, and help get supper, for I wish to scout around afterward, to see if those fellows do take it

\*Horses are always afraid of a dead body. Many have to be led blindfolded before they will carry large game.—The Author.



into their heads to come back, though I do not think they will."

"If they don't, they'll starve."

"Oh, no; they had their haversacks with them, and their weapons, and the walking is good; while, if they do come back, they are liable to run against a bullet."

"They are three to one."

"That is why I intend to fight them Indian style, if they do come," came the reply.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### OVERTAKEN.

Buffalo Bill prepared a very substantial supper for his prisoner and himself, for he had shot an antelope during the afternoon, and secured some fine steaks from it.

He ate with evident relish, seemingly entirely oblivious of his almost fatal adventure of the evening, and that even then his three foes might be slipping up on him.

Having finished supper, he got out the iron handcuffs, and ran them through the stirrup on his heavy saddle, and then fastened them upon his prisoner, doing the same with the chain on his feet, and tying a lariat around both.

"I guess you cannot get far away before I return," he explained to the prisoner, who bitterly cursed him.

Then, gathering up some of the wood he had gathered, and taking his rifle, the scout slipped out of camp.

Going cautiously up the ridge, just near the top, he built five little piles of wood, and, going quickly from one to the other, set them on fire.

At the same time he went some distance off in the darkness, and challenged, loudly, and with military ring:

"Halt!

"Who comes there?"

There came no answer, but he heard a cracking sound, as though some one trod on a dead stick, and instantly he fired down toward the timber, while loudly rang these words:

"Corporal of the guard! Post number five!"

Going quickly to another point, he also fired, and repeated the words, changing only to "Post number three!"

Then he lay back against a rock, and laughed, for he distinctly heard the sound of running feet through the timber!

"Just in time, for they were coming the sneak act, to try and steal cavalry horses, as they thought.

"But, finding the sentinels on watch, seeing half a dozen fires, and convinced now that they will have no time to lose, if they wish to get well away in the darkness, they will not return, but make tracks with all speed.

"It seems to me I could see that eye of Black Heart Joe gleam in the firelight!

"My stars! but how they made that time through these dark woods I do not know!" and the scout seemed to enjoy his ruse that had stampeded the enemy, who now gave up all hope of cutting out any cavalry horses.

Returning to his camp, Buffalo Bill stampeded out of the mouth of the canyon a pack of half-famished coyotes, that were attracted by the scent of dead bodies, and, hoping that the fugitive desperadoes would hear his shots, he fired half a dozen after the brutes.

"Well, who have you been killing?" sneered the prisoner, as the scout walked into camp.

"Coyotes."

"Who did you hail?"

"Your rescuing party, for they were sneaking up to steal a cavalry horse; but they'll not come again."

"Are they dead?"

"Not unless they died of fright, or run themselves to death."

"I wish you'd remove those dead bodies out of my sight."

"They are harmless, and I wish to have them where I can see that the coyotes do not disturb them.

"I'll cover them over, however."

With this, Buffalo Bill spread a blanket over the two dead men, and then set about making the bed for his prisoner and himself.

This done, he scattered the firebrands so they would die out; and, releasing Plum from the saddles, told him to turn in.

The man did so in silence, and the scout lay down by his side, and was soon fast asleep.

He awoke before dawn, took a short scout around, found all quiet, and, building up the fire, set to work cooking breakfast, the prisoner lending him no help whatever.

When breakfast was over, he gathered up his captured horses, which, with his own pack animal, made seven in number, and began to prepare to continue on the trail to the fort.

He divided the packs so that the horses could travel light, and then set to work to dig a grave for the dead outlaws.

This was no easy task, but it was at last accomplished; the bodies were searched for what they might have of value on them, and the scout said:

"See, Roger Plum, this goes to the Soldiers' Aid Fund, and it amounts to considerable, as you see," and he held up the bags of gold the two men had on them.

Their weapons were packed then, the horses saddled, the prisoner mounted, and Buffalo Bill was preparing to spring into his saddle, when out of the pines rode a horseman, and, as he saw the scout, he gave a loud cry, and came on at a gallop.

"As I live, it is Dr. Dick!

"He has overtaken us!" cried Buffalo Bill.

## CHAPTER XX.

### A REQUEST GRANTED.

That Buffalo Bill was surprised at the appearance of Dr. Dick, there was no denying.

What has caused him to come? was his first thought.

Something must have surely gone wrong at Last Chance Claim.

Perhaps Dave Dockery had been held up and killed.

But the scout could only surmise, while the gold king came toward him at a canter.

He was dressed in the same style that was his wont, gorgeous in the extreme, and with his gold buttons and diamonds on.

His horse was the same splendid animal Buffalo Bill had seen him dash along on in the camps at Last Chance Claim.

At sight of him, the prisoner turned very white, and his lips quivered, as he asked:



"What brings him here? Curse him!"

"His horse."

"Yes, try your wit now; but it's no joking matter for me."

"Guilty conscience, for you think he is after you, to take you back with him for the Vigilantes to hang; but I do not think that is it."

"What do you think he comes for?"

"I'll not guess, but wait and see."

A moment more, and Dr. Dick threw himself from his saddle, grasped Buffalo Bill's hand, and said:

"Cody, old fellow, I am glad to see you alive, for, do you know, Landlord Larry and I were talking it over, and we came to the conclusion that Black Heart Joe and his gang would try and head you off, rescue Plum, and kill you."

"You guessed well, doctor, for see, there are their horses."

"They did head you off, then?"

"Yes; shot my horse and the pack animal down from ambush, and, but for the arrival of a gallant rescuer, would have gotten the best of me."

"Who is he?"

"He told me he was Andrew Seldon, and also that he was the Hermit of the Grand Canyon."

"The mischief you say! I did not know any one dwelt there?"

"Nor did I; but he does, and he has a comrade with him."

"He was on his way to Wingate, to buy stores, and would not even camp the night with me; but, seeing the gang going into ambush, he went into hiding, and, when I came along and got into it over my depth, he came to the rescue like a regiment of cavalry."

"But now, tell me, what fetches you here, doctor?"

"I came to aid you, if I was needed, but got here too late, it seems."

"Well, you are always doing some one a service, Dr. Dick, and I thank you for your kind act in my behalf."

"Now you are here, you must go on to Fort Faraway with me."

"Couldn't think of it, Cody, for I came off in a hurry."

"You see, I followed the trail of those reptiles, and saw they branched off from the stage road and headed on a course that would take them across your path, and ahead of you, so I pushed on as fast as I could, and, holding on before dawn, lost their trail and stumbled upon yours; therefore, here I am."

"And right glad am I to see you; but why not go to Faraway with me?"

"Not this time; but what of your prisoner?"

"He is all right."

"Has he given you any trouble?"

"No more than he was able to do, for he has tried to poison me, brain me, and get away from me, while he curses me systematically every hour in the day, yes, and wakes me up at night with his snarls and growls; but I don't mind that, and it amuses him."

"Why did you not put a bullet through him?" demanded the doctor.

"Oh, I would not do that unless driven to it."

"But come, we'll camp here until after dinner, and then push on."

"Yes, we'll camp here for dinner, for I have a favor to ask of you, Cody."

"Granted, in advance of knowing what it is, if in my power to do it, Doc."

"Just like you, and I guess you can do it."

"Name it."

"Come with me," and the gold king led the way some paces apart from the scowling prisoner.

"You told me that, when on your way to Last Chance, you came upon a deserted camp."

"Yes."

"And a grave?"

"True."

"Down toward the Grand Canyon?"

"Yes."

"It cannot be very far from here?"

"Less than fifty miles."

"Now, Cody, I wish to go there, and see if my brother really lies in that grave."

"You could not tell now."

"Yes, I could, from two things. He broke his arm when a boy just above the elbow, his left arm, and that would show, while he also was severely frost-bitten when a little fellow, and three of his toes from his left foot had to be amputated. These marks would be proof positive, I think."

"Beyond all doubt."

"So I ask you to go with me to the grave, and let me see if it is really poor Hugh or not, for it might be that it is some one supposed to be my unfortunate brother."

"I will go with you, doctor, for it will detain me not longer than two days, at the most," decided Buffalo Bill, promptly.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE PROOF.

Having decided not to start until after dinner, the horses were staked out again, and the animal ridden by Dr. Dick really needed rest, after his long and rapid ride to overtake the scout.

The two friends, feeling that the prisoner, with his hopped feet, could not leave the canyon, walked about together, talking over matters, until Buffalo Bill said it was time to get dinner.

They gathered some wood, replenished the fire, and soon had dinner on, the prisoner refusing to aid, and watching them in his malignant way.

But he was ready to eat when the meal was ready, and more than was his share, the scout always helping him most liberally.

When the dinner was cleared away, the tin plates, cups and frying-pan washed, the horses were brought up and saddled, the prisoner mounted, and the party started off.

The prisoner was made to lead two of the pack horses, while Buffalo Bill, mounted upon the animal that had been his own pack horse, led two, and Dr. Dick the others belonging to the Black Heart Joe gang.

Down the valley they went, Buffalo Bill leading the way, and, though he could have followed the trail left by the Hermit of the Grand Canyon, he took good care to keep clear of it, for he did not wish Dr. Dick to observe it. They camped early that night, when they found water



and grass, and the next day at noon came in sight of the deserted camp which Buffalo Bill had visited before.

There stood the wickiup, as it had been left, and the gold king saw the trace of the camp as they approached it.

He instinctively picked out the large, quaking aspen tree, at the foot of which was the grave, and then dashed on.

Dismounting at the grave, he stood gazing down upon it, while Buffalo Bill took the prisoner some distance off, and left him to gather wood for a fire, while he staked out the horses.

When he returned the prisoner was serenely seated where he had left him, and had not gathered a stick of wood.

"Roger, you would make a preacher swear," said Buffalo Bill, smiling, for he would not give the man the satisfaction of knowing that he annoyed him.

"How?"

"Oh, just on principle; but you wish some supper, do you not?"

"Yes."

"Then get some wood."

"I don't have to, and I like to be waited on."

The scout said nothing, but Dr. Dick just then approached, and overheard the remark.

Instantly came the words:

"See here, Plum, I shall be with this outfit for a couple of days, and not a swallow of water or morsel of food shall pass your lips unless you do your share.

"Now, which shall it be—work or starve?"

"Work," was the brisk response, and the prisoner began to gather wood.

"You are too kind to him, Cody, and he knows you will not treat him harshly.

"I can't, for it is like abusing a dying man, for he is sure to hang when I get him to the fort, and he is tried."

"He ought to hang, for he is as bad as they make them; but I have opened the grave."

"With what result?"

"He was decently buried, and, what is more, a ring was left on his finger, which I recognize, while the three toes are missing from his left foot."

"Then there is no mistake as to its being your brother?"

"None whatever.

"Here is the ring, and I will soon have the grave filled in."

"I will help you, now that Plum has taken to work."

They walked together to the grave, and Buffalo Bill said:

"I am glad your mind is at rest, as far as your knowing the truth is concerned."

"Yes, it is better."

"And you still hold to the belief that your brother was killed by Sergeant Wallace Weston?"

"More than ever, now, I believe it."

"Why so?"

"He was a skillful carver in wood, and, I remember, at his own and our names in the beech trees near our homes, and those letters, in the name, Hugh Mayhew, are an exact counterpart of those of the long ago, for they have the same peculiar form to them."

"You seem convinced, Dr. Dick, yet you are wrong, for let me tell you that I know who killed your brother."

"You know?" and the doctor grasped the scout's arm, with a grip of iron.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE SCOUT'S PLAN.

Dr. Dick was impressed painfully by the words of the fort scout, and said, earnestly:

"Tell me what you mean, Cody; for surely you did not kill my brother?"

"I? Oh, no; but, as I said, I know who did."

"Tell me who he was, and, even if not Wallace Weston, I will hunt him to his grave!"

"Don't say that, doctor, for you do not know how your brother may have wronged him, what he may have done to deserve death at his slayer's hands."

"Who was the man, Cody?"

"You remember that I told you I was rescued by a mysterious man?"

"Yes, one calling himself the Hermit of the Grand Canyon, I think you said, though I paid little attention to him then, as I was interested in finding you safe."

"Yes, he was called the Hermit of Grand Canyon, or, rather, called himself so.

"Well, when he spoke of living on the canyon, or near it, I at once connected him with the camp and the grave."

"Yes, yes," eagerly.

"I asked him about the camp."

"And he knew of it?"

"He did."

"And the grave?"

"He knew of that, too."

"Tell me all that he said, Cody," urgently.

"Well, he said it had been his camp; that he had found there a man who had cruelly wronged him, and that he was even then going to kill his comrade."

"And did?"

"No; the Hermit said that he fought a fair fight with him, killed him, dug his grave, and cut that name upon this tree."

"But who was this hermit?"

"He said that his name was Seldon, as I thought that I mentioned to you."

"If you did, it escaped me. Seldon, Seldon—I knew a Seldon once—Andrew Seldon."

"Why, that was the name he gave me."

"My God! can this be? Describe him!"

"A well-formed man, but with a stoop in his shoulders; long, dark hair and beard, and wearing glasses."

"Seldon was a well-formed man, as large as I am, had dark hair and beard, and wore glasses."

"If it was Andrew Seldon, he was once my friend, but we drifted apart, and I afterward heard that he had killed a man in a duel, which forced him to leave his native state of Tennessee."

"Yes, and it was reported that he came West to the gold mines, to try and make a fortune, for the trial swamped him, it was said, and the feeling of the people was so bitter against him, for some reason, that he left."

"That must be the man, for he struck me as one who would not bury himself in these wilds unless it was as a



fugitive from justice, or some other reason that made him shun his fellowmen," Buffalo Bill declared.

"Well, if it was Andrew Seldon that took my brother's life, he had cause, I am sure, given him by Hugh, whom he also knew, and there are circumstances connected with him that would induce me to take back my oath to hunt down the slayer of Hugh Mayhew."

"Then you are now convinced that Wallace Weston is dead, and that it was not he who killed your brother?"

"I ought to be; and yet I will hardly feel at rest on that point until——"

"Until what?" asked Buffalo Bill, as Dr. Dick paused.

"Until I find Andrew Seldon, and meet him face to face, and know that it was he who took Hugh's life, and why he did so, bad as my brother was."

"Well, we can find Seldon, I think."

"How, and where?"

"I'll tell you what I will do for you, Dr. Dick."

"Yes, Cody."

"I must take my prisoner to the fort."

"Certainly."

"And can you not go with me?"

"I cannot."

"Well, you return to Last Chance, and fit out for a rough trip of a month or more, until snow flies, for it will not do to be caught in the Grand Canyon country after winter sets in."

"By no means."

"Come with a pack horse, well supplied with bedding, food and ammunition."

"I will."

"And I will also fit out well, and meet you here, in, say ten days to two weeks, the first to arrive to wait for the other."

"I'll be here, Cody; and then?"

"We will hunt up Andrew Seldon."

"It's a bargain!" was the emphatic reply.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### AT THE RENDEZVOUS.

With some definite plan in view to find out the truth as to who killed Hugh Mayhew, Dr. Dick seemed satisfied, even if it proved to be his old friend, Andrew Seldon.

They did not discuss the matter further, but went to their supper, which Plum had been energetically preparing, and, as he had no means of poisoning them, they did not fear to partake of what he had cooked.

They passed an undisturbed night, and the next morning made an early start, the doctor going on his way back to Last Chance, and carrying with him one of the horses of the Black Heart Joe outfit, which Buffalo Bill insisted upon taking along to rest his own animal and divide weights.

The scout and his prisoner then pushed on for Fort Faraway, for Buffalo Bill was anxious to reach there the following night.

To do this, he did not spare the horses, but, greatly to his disappointment, Plum's animal gave out; in fact, seemed so used up and lame that he could not go further.

What should be done? To delay there, even for a few hours' rest, would prevent him from reaching the fort next day.

Plum was not sorry, of course; the deserter was only anxious not to ever see the fort again; so, when the horse gave out, his busy brain began to conceive some plan of escape.

But Buffalo Bill did not long hesitate. He would leave his prisoner and ride on for the fort; then send a detachment back for the prisoner.

Plum was thereupon made to dismount. The poor, lame beast was led aside, and a pistol shot soon told the deserter that he was to be left alone in that lonely wilderness.

"Why did you kill the brute?" asked the prisoner.

"To prevent you from getting on him and riding away," was Buffalo Bill's explanation.

"I propose to leave you here. You'll be safe enough, with leg and wrist-irons on, I guess. I'll go on to the fort, and send a squad back after you. The coyotes won't bother you, for they'll have the horse to eat; but, as we haven't seen any for a whole day, I guess you'll not be disturbed by them."

Protest was of no use, so Plum was left, with a canteen of water and grub enough for a two days' supply. He was not lariatied to a tree, or to the rocks which covered the rough trail, for Cody well knew that was unnecessary, and that, so long as the manacles and wristlets held, the deserter could not travel far from the spot.

"Stay right around here, Plum," he advised, for if you get off the trail you'll be sure to starve."

Thus, having arranged, Cody mounted again and rode off, leaving the now thoroughly cowed Plum alone with his evil thoughts."

On, on, pressed Buffalo Bill, in as hard a ride as he ever undertook, and, just as the sun was setting the next day, he was spied from the fort lookout, and his coming reported to the commanding officer.

As the great scout approached the stockade, cheer after cheer welcomed him.

Once within the stockade gates, Buffalo Bill proceeded direct to Major Randall's quarters to report.

The major listened to Buffalo Bill's story of his adventurous furlough, and said:

"Well, Cody, you are, indeed, the Wizard of the War-path, for, what you go upon the trail to seek, you never fail to find.

"You shall have full credit for this remarkable work you have done in the capture of this bad man, Plum."

"Don't forget Dr. Dick, also, major, for what I accomplished was through his aid, sir," reminded the scout.

"He shall have credit, too, and I hope to have him visit us some time at the fort. I very much desire to meet this extraordinary man."

"He may soon visit us, major, for I have an appointment with him in a few days."

"Here?"

"No, sir."

"Where, then, may I ask?"

"At the Grand Canyon, sir."

"In the name of all the saints, what are you two going there for?"

"Well, sir, I have a curiosity to see the canyon, for one thing, and we wish to find the hermit that lives there, also."

"When do you go?"



"I leave here, sir, in about five days, so as to be at the rendezvous on time."

"I suppose there is no use of my ordering you not to go, Cody?"

"I hope not, sir, for I would like to solve that mystery."

"Well, you are so able to take care of yourself that I will say you can go."

"Thank you, sir!"

"But you had better take some of your men with you."

"No, sir; I prefer to go alone. Dr. Dick is worth a dozen men."

"Well, I wish you every success," said Major Randall, as the scout departed to go to his quarters and seek much-needed rest.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### IN MORTAL TERROR.

When left alone by Buffalo Bill, the prisoner in irons gazed after the departing scout as far as he could catch a glimpse of him in the distance.

When at last he disappeared from view, his face became more livid in hue, and he moved uneasily about.

There was in his heart the feeling that the scout had not deserted him, that he would return for him, slow as must be the pace on to the fort if they went together.

But all hope gradually died out that this would be the case, as several hours passed away, and the scout did not reappear.

Then all the horror of his position flashed upon him, and he groaned aloud in his mental anguish.

He had brought it upon himself, he well knew, for, when unnoticed by the scout, he had driven the small blade of his knife into the hoof of his horse to lame him, using a stone to do so with.

He was not sure how he would benefit by it, but he was as tricky as a fox, and cruel as a coyote, and did all he could to change his position as best he might annoy his captor and delay the progress to the fort.

Now, as he sat there alone, he felt all the horror of his situation.

He was not tied to one place, but was ironed, hands and feet.

Able to move about, it was only in a creeping way, and he felt that he could not get far off in a day.

And, if he did succeed in getting a mile or two away, his trail could be followed, and he would be overtaken.

Not far away from him lay the dead body of his horse, which he had so cruelly lamed, and it would not be very long before the coyotes would scent blood and come for feast.

He would hear them near him all night, snarling and fighting over the feast, and their bright eyes would be eagerly turned upon him as a dessert.

Could he beat them off until help came?

It would not take the beasts long to find out that he was most helpless.

The instinct that caused them to follow a wounded or sick buffalo, deer or antelope, knowing that their patience would in the end be rewarded, would also tell them that the man was unable to defend himself, and before long he must fall their prey.

These thoughts all crowded upon the brain of the man, until he felt tempted to take his own life.

He had glossed over his misdeeds before, never allowed himself to think, and by busy action had driven off all twinges of conscience, all bitter, cruel memories.

But there was nothing for him to do now but think, and his thoughts seemed to fairly burn into his brain.

Night came on, and, as soon as the shadows deepened, afar off he heard the yelp of a coyote.

He started as though a rifle shot had been fired at him.

The yelp was a signal that there was game abroad, that a feast was waiting for hungry beasts to devour.

The call was answered from another direction, and afar off came a third sharp bark.

The leader of the coyotes was gathering his clans together to devour the dead horse, and every added yelp gave the prisoner greater terror.

Nearer and nearer came the cries of the wild beasts, until at last, though he could not see them in the darkness, Plum knew that the thickets were full of the ravenous creatures.

He shouted wildly, and there was a scattering.

But only for a while, and again the coyotes assembled.

Shouts were not dangerous, the beasts soon discovered, and it was not very long before a perfect chorus of howls, yelps and whines made the night hideous.

If they enjoyed it, if they were expressing gratitude before feasting, to the prisoner it was like unto death.

At last, with wild yells, they attacked their midnight supper, and the snapping of teeth, the growls and savage yelps told that they were fighting for the choice morsels furnished them by the prisoner laming his horse, as he did, and which necessitated his having to be shot.

Bitterly, over and over again, did Plum curse himself for his act of cruelty, but all to no avail, for there was no help for him; he must grin and bear the result of his work.

At last the night wore away, and with the rising sun the coyotes scattered as the man hobbled toward them.

But it was a long day of terror and despair that followed, and another night more terrible still.

With the dawn of a second day, the man saw that the bones of the horse had been picked clean.

"To-night they will attack me," he groaned.

And so the day wore along, with the man in mortal terror for his life, until at last the thought came to him that, bound as he was, he could, in his despair, climb a tree.

He hastily sought for one where he could find a resting-place above the highest springs of the wolves, and, taking his food and canteen with him, he went toward the tree.

He found it a giant task to climb it, but, as it was bent over by the wind, as the trunk was gnarled and knotty, he at last, after an hour of desperate struggle, was successful in reaching the limbs where he could rest.

With his belt and canteen strap he then tied himself among the branches securely, and, satisfied that he would at least not be torn to pieces that night, he gave a wild



shout of triumph, which scattered afar the coyotes that were greedily watching his movements.

Then thought came to him once more, and he muttered to himself:

"How strange it is that I, who will be hanged upon my return to the fort, should so struggle against death, a scarcely less dreaded death, for these wolves would quickly end my existence—yes, as quickly as the noose of the hangman."

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE SENTENCE.

Soon after the arrival of Buffalo Bill at the fort, Lieutenant Tompkins, one of the officers, and a dozen of his countrymen were dispatched to bring back the prisoner, Roger Plum.

A skillful scout accompanied the party, and Buffalo Bill described to him just where they could push on and halt before dawn; so, after a rest of a couple of hours, when daylight came, they would be able to pick up his trail and follow it on to where he had left the prisoner.

The chief of scouts was most anxious to have the soldiers lose no time in going after the man, as he well knew the danger of leaving him there, unarmed and in irons, but felt that it could not be helped.

Still, he did not wish the man, though certain to be executed when brought to the fort, to die through his leaving him behind, and to meet an awful death by being torn to pieces by wolves.

When, therefore, Lieutenant Tompkins was the officer sent on the duty, and had departed upon his mission, Buffalo Bill felt relieved, but he had said to the scout that was to go as guide:

"Don't delay a minute longer than you have to, and make no mistake in following my trail."

Lieutenant Tompkins was not a man to delay on a trail, and he pushed along until the guide told him that they had gone as far as they dared without having found Buffalo Bill's trail.

So they went into camp, and had a couple of hours' sleep, after which breakfast was eaten, and the horses were saddled and ready for the trail.

In the meanwhile, with the first glimmer of dawn, the scout had been out on foot looking for the trail of Buffalo Bill, and found it, after a long search, so was ready to push on as soon as all had breakfast.

The pace set was a lively one, but the horses were comparatively fresh, the trail was well marked, and no halt was made until noon.

An hour's rest, and the party were again in the saddle.

The sun was yet an hour high, when the scout halted, with his hand to his ear.

"They are after him, sir."

"Who?"

"The coyotes."

"Yes, I hear them."

"We will push on more rapidly."

"They have got him treed, sir, I guess," said the scout, and he turned off at a gallop.

A ride of a mile, and they were greeted with a shout of delight.

"A man greeting with a shout of welcome those who have come to carry him to his death!" muttered Lieutenant Tompkins.

But he dashed up to the tree, scattering the coyotes gathered about it with a few revolver shots, and said:

"Ho, Plum, we have found you!"

"Yes, and in time to save me from those terrible brutes, for some of them ran up the trunk nearly to my feet.

"To-night they would have gnawed the tree down."

"Come, men, help him down, and make him comfortable, for we will camp here to-night," said Lieutenant Tompkins, and his men hastened to obey.

That night Plum slept soundly, for he was worn out, heart, brain and body, and for the time being seemed content to escape from the coyotes, whatever might be his fate upon reaching the fort.

After breakfast the party started, by slow marches, for the fort, and reached there upon the afternoon of the next day.

All eyes were upon the prisoner, as he rode in between two cavalymen, for his irons had been removed, and not a glance of pity was given him, for every soldier knew how heinous had been his crimes, and that he richly merited death as punishment.

Buffalo Bill had, when the coming back of the party had been reported to him, gone at once to a point where he could get a view, and leveled his field glass upon them.

He gave a sigh of relief when he saw, in the midst of the soldiers, the prisoner, and riding along unaided.

When he had time to rest, Plum was taken before Major Randall, who promptly recognized him as the man that was wanted, and other witnesses also asserted that there was no mistake as to the man.

So Plum was sent to the guardhouse in irons, and a consultation of officers was called to decide upon his fate.

In this council it was shown that he was already under sentence of death, that he had escaped, and the special orders were that he was to be taken "dead or alive," and a price was offered for him under either circumstance.

If captured alive and taken to a frontier fort, after ten days' respite, he was to be executed in any manner that the commanding officer deemed best.

With such orders to guide him, Major Randall at once



set the day of execution, ten days off, and commanded that he should be granted his request, which was to be shot to death by a platoon of soldiers.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

## THE RENDEZVOUS.

The capture of Plum, and his being brought safely into camp, won for Buffalo Bill considerable praise when it became known how much he had gone through in getting possession of the man, and the trouble he had had with him on the trail to the post.

The men seemed to feel a relief that the end would soon be over, while the scout congratulated himself that his appointment with Dr. Dick at the rendezvous of the deserted camp would call him away from the fort before the day of execution.

What he had to do in the strict line of stern duty, Buffalo Bill never shrank from, no matter how deeply he might feel what he was forced to be an actor in; but he shuddered, as a brave man ever does, seeing the suffering of another, and did not wish to be near when his prisoner was led forth to die.

One man at the mercy of many, even when he has sinned against heaven and his fellow-beings most grievously, and deserves punishment, is a sad sight to look upon, a pitiable scene to gaze upon, and Buffalo Bill's brave but tender heart revolted at the thought, and so it was that he was most anxious to get away and fill his appointment with Dr. Dick.

So it was that, five days after, Buffalo Bill returned to the fort and reported to Major Randall that he was ready to depart, and, mounted upon a fine horse, and with another one carrying his pack, the scout set off on his mysterious and perilous journey.

He took his time in going, but arrived at the deserted camp on the tenth day, as he had promised Dr. Dick.

The doctor was not there, however, and, as he had not arrived the next day, the scout led his horses in camp, and went off on foot hunting.

He was just about to leave a thick growth of cedars, some miles from his camp, when he started back, as he saw a horseman going alone down the valley.

He had following him two horses, carrying heavy packs, but he was too far off for the scout to trail him.

"No; I will be able to follow the trail of his three horses without trouble, so I'll not attract his attention now."

"Yes, it is the Hermit of the Canyon, Andrew Seldon, and, even if he did kill Hugh Mayhew, the doctor shall do me no harm, for I owe it to him that I was not killed the other day."

So back to camp went Buffalo Bill, carrying with him some fine venison steaks and a wild turkey.

That evening at sunset Dr. Dick rode into camp, also leading a pack horse and well supplied with all that was needed for the expedition.

The scout told the doctor of the trouble he had had with the prisoner, and how he had been forced to leave him on the trail through his having lamed his horse purposely, for the man had defiantly confessed as much to Lieutenant Tompkins on the ride back to the post.

"And this is the day appointed for his execution—yes, about this very hour he is being led out to die," said Buffalo Bill.

"He will be hanged, of course?" said Dr. Dick.

"No; Major Randall allowed him to be shot, instead."

"The major was merciful," and there was a slight sneer in the tone of Dr. Dick.

"I think it wise to show mercy, where it can be done, for, as the man had to die, it was only kindness to allow him to have the choice of the manner of taking off."

"Yet brave soldiers are shot."

"In honorable battle, yes; but this man's death was demanded by the stern law of military discipline, and when he is shot justice will be satisfied, and an example set as a warning to others not to sin as he has done, so I say peace to his ashes," and Buffalo Bill glanced at his watch, as he uttered the words, and saw that it was just the hour set for the execution.

"Well, Cody," said the doctor, after a moment of silence, "do we start upon this trail to-night?"

"No, not until morning, when we will have the day before us."

"It is just as well."

"The man has returned to the canyon, for I saw him pass when I was hunting game."

"Ah! Did you speak with him?"

"Oh, no, but we can go directly to the spot where I saw him, and from there readily follow his trail on to his retreat."

"That is good, and I will be glad when the secret is solved whether he be Wallace Weston in reality, or Andrew Seldon; and, if the latter, why, he took the life of my poor brother Hugh."

"By seeing him you will know; but, Dr. Dick, I cannot stand by and allow you to attack one who saved my life as Andrew Seldon did," said Buffalo Bill, firmly.

"I do not ask it, Cody."

"I knew Seldon well, and liked him, while, if he was wronged by Hugh, which I cannot but doubt, I can say no word against his death as stated."

"I only wish to know if Weston is yet alive, living in that canyon with Seldon, and of the death of my brother Hugh."

"Then I shall be content to come away with you, and let the past be forgotten."



"Well, we will start early in the morning," answered Buffalo Bill; and the next morning they started out from the camp, and rode to the spot where Buffalo Bill had been when he saw the Hermit of the Canyon go by.

From there he rode to the place where the hermit had passed, and readily picked up the trail left by the strange man whose identity Dr. Dick was so anxious to establish.

For miles Buffalo Bill followed the tracks of the three horses, and by night had reached the canyon, so they went into camp, and the next day it was taken up again, and the two pushed on to the very verge of the mighty abyss, where they were astounded to find that the trail down into it was by a path that it seemed fatal to follow.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### CONCLUSION.

When Buffalo Bill and the doctor came to the brink of the mighty canyon they halted there, with awe and admiration commingled in their glance over Nature's greatest work.

A short search revealed to Buffalo Bill that a descent into the canyon, by that dizzy, dangerous trail would be at the peril of their lives.

But they had come there to solve the secret, and they were, neither of them, men to turn back with victory in sight, no matter what obstacles to be overcome.

So they went into camp back upon the ridge, and prepared for the work before them by adjusting the pack-saddles differently, and having all ready for whatever might confront them.

The next morning, early, they arose, breakfasted, saddled up, and rode down to the large rock around which they would have to make their way, and there stood regarding the undertaking they had set out to overcome.

Nothing daunted, Buffalo Bill and Dr. Dick led their horses along the dizzy trail, worked them cautiously around the rock that was the greatest danger point, and held on down into the valley.

Up they went through the valley, awed by the grandeur of the scenery, until, night coming on, they went into camp there.

When asleep, they were roused by a tremendous crashing sound that shook the earth.

It sounded like one mighty burst of thunder, or the solid discharge of a frigate's broadside.

Down the valley rolled thundering echoes, and clouds of dust and sand were swept over their camp.

Thus they awaited until morning, sleeping no more that night, and then once more the now deeply-anxious travelers took up the trail.

It led to a mass of piled-up rocks, which had fallen from a cliff thousands of feet in height.

One end of a crushed cabin was visible, and, pointing to it, Buffalo Bill said:

"Fate is against our solving the secret, Dr. Dick, for there is the hermit's cabin, crushed to atoms. Here he dwelt, he and his companion, and beneath these acres of red stone all are buried—men, horses and all—see, here is a rock upon which is painted a name."

"Yes, it is that of Andrew Seldon."

"It was he who killed my brother, and I now feel that Wallace Weston is dead, even if he was the companion here of Andrew Seldon."

"But Andrew Seldon is also dead, and this is his mighty monument, this heap of stones."

"Yes, they were mining under the cliff for gold, and the mass of rocks gave way and buried them," was Buffalo Bill's opinion.

"Yes, buried them and all their belongings."

"Come, let us get out of this weird, awful place, and never set foot here again."

The scout, with all his nerve, was willing to go, so they retraced their way up the dizzy heights once more, little dreaming that eyes followed their movements, for in reality the two miners had not perished, but had moved their camp, fearing that very disaster of the falling of the cliff.

They remained behind, buried from the world, as the Hermits of the Grand Canyon, laying up gold to enjoy at a future day, when they dared venture forth and face their fellowmen in a foreign land.

And away from the awful spot went the scout and Dr. Dick, the latter to return to Last Chance and live a life of mystery, of strangest romance and thrilling adventure, while Buffalo Bill continued to win laurels in his daring career that has made his name famous the wide world over.

THE END.

Next week's issue, Number 73, will contain "Buffalo Bill's Death Charm; or, The Lady in Velvet." A mysterious lady, clad in velvet, once gave Buffalo Bill a jeweled pin, which she told him would protect him from all sorts of dangers. The adventures he met with while wearing this charm, on the Texan prairies, and the perils he went through there, would be enough to turn white the hair of any ordinary man. Buffalo Bill is not superstitious, and does not know whether to credit some of these escapes to the merits of the Death Charm or to ordinary good luck, prudence and watchfulness. It rests with the readers of this weekly to pass judgment upon it. Perhaps some of you boys will be able to decide whether the Wizard of the Trail owed his life to the Death Charm or not. There will, doubtless, be a diversity of opinion on the subject, but, whatever you decide, you will all agree that the story is a rattling good one from cover to cover.





# THRILLING ADVENTURE



On page 31 you will find some interesting reading matter.

You see the splendid prizes we are offering in that new contest we have just started!

Everybody seems to be entering it, for we have a big stack of entries on hand already.

Get into it quick.

Here are a few left over from the last contest. They were too good to throw away. We simply had to print them, though the contest is closed.

## Almost.

(By J. Mills, Ohio.)

One night my friend and I went uptown. After staying a while we got on a street car and stood on the step. My pard got off before they started fast. I stayed on till it got going faster, then jumped off, thinking it was not going fast, but I soon found out different.

The car was going at a rate of about forty miles an hour. I landed on my feet, but the force compelled me to spring high into the air. Again I landed on my feet and again I bounded into the air like a rubber ball, this time coming down on my right side, my arm under me. But I did not stop yet, but slid along on the pavement for about fifteen feet (although I didn't stop to measure), stopping in the middle of a mud puddle.

My clothes were badly torn, my right elbow and knee skinned and my thumb sprained, but fortunately no bones broken.

Think what would have happened had I landed on my head!

## A Desperate Fight.

(By George Weaver, Kansas.)

This happened one summer in July, while visiting my aunt in the western part of Arizona.

My aunt had sent me and their dog, Hector (one of the best sheep dogs), to bring in the cow, and I thought I would take my repeating rifle, as I had to pass through some timber, and mountain lions had been seen near there.

After I had got well into the woods I noticed that a storm was coming up, so I sent the dog on to bring in the cow, while I stayed in the timber.

After the dog had been gone about ten minutes it began to rain, and as I did not want to get my gun wet I crawled into a hollow log, which was none too large.

After I had been in the log about a half an hour the

rain began to slacken and at the same time I thought I heard the dog coming, so I called:

"Here Hector, old boy, come here!"

What did I see but a large mountain lion standing within six feet of the log, listening.

After listening about a minute it began to come closer to the log; presently it saw me and began to purr like a cat. I managed to get my gun up, but owing to my cramped position I could not aim well. I fired at its head and as I fired it dropped. In my excitement I crawled out of my log, but it jumped up and sprang upon me.

My uncle being alarmed at my absence and hearing the report of my gun came at once to me, and seeing the lion, rushed to my rescue, grabbing a large club as he came.

The lion, seeing a new foe, turned upon him, but as it was about to spring my uncle hit him a stunning blow on the head, but before he could recover it was upon him.

As the lion was about to sink its fangs in his throat I, having meanwhile crawled to my gun, put the barrel in its ear and fired.

I then fainted from loss of blood.

When I came to I found myself in bed at the ranch. I was laid up two weeks recovering from my wounds.

I still have the skin to remember the encounter by, and also several scars.

## A Successful Ruse.

A few years ago, shortly after the pursuit and capture of the blood-thirsty Apache chief, Geronimo, and his troop of hostile Indians, in which I had participated, and when the inhabitants of New Mexico were beginning to recover from the terrible anxiety into which they had been plunged by the murderous depredations of these cruel savages, I found myself at the township of T., on the A. and P. Railway, en route from Lord B.'s ranch in Mexico, to Fort Worth, Texas.



I determined to "take in the town," which, being chiefly made up of gambling and drinking saloons, and peopled by a strange mixture of gamblers, cowboys, and desperadoes, I thought promised a little unusual excitement and food for future reflection. The sequel proved the correctness of my surmise; indeed, the result was a trifle too exciting.

Having traveled extensively in the far West, I was not surprised to find the gaming-tables and bars surrounded by men armed and prepared for any emergency that might arise. Breeches and boots, blue shirt, sombrero, two-shooters, and a bowie, comprised the costume of the majority. After visiting one or two of the smaller dens, I dropped into one of larger dimensions, where the stakes were higher, the drinking heavier, and the crowd more reckless.

While studying the countenances of the anxious players, and admiring the cool, imperturbable demeanor of the dealers, I was accosted by a handsome, strapping fellow, evidently a ranchman, and considerably under the influence of bad whisky.

"Have a wet, stranger?"

Knowing that a refusal would be regarded as an insult, I accepted. After a second liquor, for which he also insisted on settling, I was met with the query, "You're a pretty good scholar, I guess?"

"I can read and write," I replied.

"Well," continued he, "my ranch is about fifty miles back, and I want a teacher for my two boys. Forty dollars a month, plenty of bronchos to ride, and no interference. Come?"

"No, thank you," I answered.

His eyes flashed angrily for an instant, as he returned:

"Well, I guess you'll either go or fight—which?"

Scarcely imagining the man could be in earnest, I said: "Fight, certainly."

In an instant his shooter was in my face. An inspiration saved my life, for I was unarmed.

"Stop!" I cried. "Where I hail from we fight with our hands. Take off your shirt."

Amid the profound silence of the bystanders, who appeared to think my doom was sealed, my opponent proceeded to strip. He saw me no more; for, the instant the shirt covered his face, I darted between the astonished spectators and made a bee line for the door. Thanks to the darkness, I reached my hotel in safety, the shots which the enraged man fired after me flying wide of their mark.

Five minutes later he was a corpse, shot through the heart, but not before he had killed two of his companions, who had ventured to rally him on the way he had been baffled.

### An Adventure in the Rocky Mountains.

(By Robert Neugebauer, Colo.)

One day in August Roy Smith and I planned to go hunting in the mountains. Roy had a burro and his father allowed him to take his shotgun. I had a 22-caliber pistol. What more could boys wish or need?

Early the next morning we were out of bed before sun-up. My mother prepared our lunch while we prepared for our journey. We were soon off and into the mountains. The place to which we were going was some

ten miles distant, and, as it was no easy traveling for the burro, with two boys on his back, we took our time. We passed through many beautiful canyons, making their walls echo and re-echo with our shouts and laughter. We also passed by a great many shaft houses, located on the sites of abandoned mines. And thus we passed along, little dreaming of the danger we were in.

The "jack" was trotting along down grade, in spite of its load, when he suddenly stopped and wheeled around. So quick had been the unlooked-for move that we lost our balance and, sliding from his sleek back, went head-long down the trail. Regaining our feet, a little bruised but still alive, and with our firearms grasped tightly in our hands, we looked about to see what had caused all of the confusion.

It did not take us long to ascertain, for there, not over ten yards away, crouched a huge mountain lion.

It did not take us seven seconds to make up our mind that we had business in the opposite direction.

That was our only escape, and remounting the burro we made for the nearest shaft house, spurring the "jack" with our heels until we almost wore holes in his sides.

For the next few moments it was a race for life. The shaft house door being open we dashed through it, but about twenty-five yards ahead of the lion, and, just as Roy swung shut the creaking door, the animal flung his wiry form against it. But the boards proved rotten with age, and to our horror the next instant the tawny head and forepaws of the beast protruded through the broken timbers. But we were ready for him, quick though his attack had been.

Bang! Bang!

The report of the shotgun rang out, and the lion fell back against the door. He was wounded, but the next instant he would have sprung upon Roy had I not taken aim with my pistol and fired, striking him full in the ear.

The shot proved its effect, for the next moment the huge form trembled and then fell back dead.

But we didn't stay to get his hide or anything else, however, for we knew that the gentleman's wife would no doubt be about and was even then, perhaps, not far away. So we left for the home trip at a lively gait.

We arrived safe and sound, and without further accident, and we now give three cheers for Buffalo Bill

### Which Was Frightened the Most?

(By Chas. E. Arnold, Ohio.)

Some three months ago I took K's log train for a day's fishing in the mountains, and had fair success up to noon. I was at rest about mid-noon seated upon a vine-grown boulder and eating the remainder of my lunch, when a yellow apparition descended upon me from the mountain above. A slight racket of the creature's claws upon the rocks gave me note of its approach, and looking upward I saw a wildcat about the size of a common beagle hound.

On it came, dropping from rock to rock, coming unconcernedly, click-clack, click-clack, toward me.

The animal was indeed a fine one, and appeared not to notice me, unless, indeed, as some creature such as may have fallen upon the retina of its dreams, until it stood upon a level at less than fifteen yards.

Then it halted and gazed, realizing a new creature in



its front. Its great head was uplifted, its greenish-yellow eyes seeming to flare out their surprise; its legs were rigid, and every gray and yellow hair lay straight down upon its skin.

Not fear but astonishment was in this expression. It stood upon a flat rock, with a long leap between us, and I expected to see it make it any moment.

Evidently it wanted none of me, at least after the first startled survey. Its eyes presently lost their greenish glare and its hair again stood at its natural angle.

Its ears pricked forward and its lionlike form swayed to and fro rather amicably for a few moments. All too soon it leaped off the rock and trotted noiselessly down the stream, stopping now and then to give me a friendly nod. It is needless to say I at once returned to the camp.

### The Ghost in the Cave.

(By Dick Stewart, Mo.)

It was one evening, late in the fall of the year 18—, that a friend of mine and myself were walking up a small ravine in the Ozarks, not far from a small mining town named Nolan.

We had been out all day, but had seen no game except a few hares.

This was our first hunting trip, and, like all boys, we wanted to make a big haul. We had been watching closely for game and paying little attention to where we were going. Therefore, when we decided to go back to the village we did not know which way to start.

We stood there in the ravine, arguing which was the right way to go.

My friend wanted to go up the ravine and I wanted to go down.

Neither of us knew which was the right way, so at last we agreed to toss a coin to see which way to go. We tossed the coin and my friend was the winner, so we went up the ravine.

We walked for some distance without finding a trail. At last it began to get dark. We soon came to a cave at the side of the ravine, but didn't care much about going into the cave at night, so we passed on by. Well, we went about a half mile up the ravine and found to our sorrow that we could not go any farther.

We sat down to rest a while, as it was growing dark fast. We had begun to think that we would have to camp out over night. Finally we decided to return to the cave and camp for the night. We returned to the cave, went in and built a fire. Then we sat down to talk over our hunting. At length we got hungry. We had some food left from our lunch, which we had brought for dinner.

My friend was three years my senior, he being eighteen and I fifteen. I was afraid of ghosts, but he (my friend) wasn't afraid of anything.

I believe I haven't introduced my friend, so I will do so now. His name was Jack Mendon.

Well, Jack was always wanting to scare me, so while we were eating our supper he told me a ghost story. By the time he had finished his story I was afraid to go to sleep. Finally we both went to sleep. How long we had slept I do not know, but I was suddenly awakened by a kick in the side. What I saw caused me to scream.

There, right in front of me, stood a tall, white figure, which I took to be a ghost.

I grasped my revolver—not looking for Jack, but if I had I would not have seen him—and, with trembling words, ordered the ghost out of the cave, but in vain, for it moved not an inch or said not a word.

I drew my revolver and repeated my order, adding, "If you don't get I'll blow a hole through you."

Again it made no move, so I took aim and fired three shots from my revolver.

Crack! crack! crack!

They sounded like cannons in the cave.

Still the ghost did not move, so I again pulled trigger, but to my horror the revolver failed to go off. I snapped it three times and finding that the cylinder was empty, I tried to reload, but I was so nervous I couldn't. Suddenly the white robes fell off the ghost as if by magic and I beheld—a man—but who?

None other than Jack Mendon, my friend. My pistol had been loaded with blank cartridges, and so did no harm. I did not know this, but he did.

It soon became day and we resumed our journey with better success, reaching the village before noon. Jack Mendon was never so happy as when he was sitting in front of the store telling how he played the ghost on Dick, and how he had slipped my revolver while I was asleep, taking the loads all out and putting in three blank shells.

Perhaps it was well he made the change.

### The Adventure in the Pine Tree.

(By Ph. Frank Margolin, N. Y.)

The following is an adventure in which I participated, and which I will try to describe:

I had reached the age of fifteen years, when one feels he knows everything and is full of mischief.

Well, one day last summer I happened to stroll through a private ground with my brother and a friend of mine, in search of some fun. I found all the fun I wanted, and more, too, I tell you.

As I said before, we passed through a ground, when we saw a stately pine. Upon reaching it I saw two boys sitting on a lower branch. When I saw them a mischievous thought struck me.

"I say, you," I cried, "you had better get off that tree, for this feller's father owns this ground and he'll tell on you," pointing to my friend.

"Dere is tree boids in dis tree, in a big nest on de top," exclaimed one.

"I don't care," I replied, "get down."

They did so and walked away.

When they were out of sight I told my friend and brother to keep guard at the foot of the tree while I would climb up and get the "boids in de tree."

I climbed and climbed, until I had reached the topmost branch of the tree, and was about to lay my hands on the nest when—

"Now, boys, how would you like it if I went into your father's ground and stepped all over the grass and flowers," called a feminine voice.

My brother Harry, hearing this, dusted at the rate of a mile a minute.



"Here, Jim, Jack, quick! get the gun—sick 'em Rover!" cried that same voice again.

I, taking it for granted that it was meant for me, took a tumble. Down I went, head foremost, my face and hands scratched in a dozen places and my clothes torn into shreds. At last I fell to the ground with a thud. I picked myself up and was about to run when, bang! went a gun, and almost instantly I clapped my hands on the base of my spine and let out a yell, which could have been heard for miles. I managed to escape, however, but not with a whole skin. I have felt the effects of those buckshots for a long time, and I can tell you that much, that I will never hunt for birds on private ground any more, even if I knew that I was totally safe from those dangerous buckshot rifles.

### A Good Lesson.

(By Harry Wing, N. Y.)

Several of us boys were in the habit of catching onto freight trains in the railroad yards, when an accident happened to me which broke us of the trick.

We were accustomed to go to the freight yards every afternoon after school. When a freight pulled out we would swing aboard and ride to the "hog back," which was several miles from town. The "hog back" was the highest point on the railroad in this section, and consequently trains from both ways must go slower. We were thus able to easily get off and just as easily board the next freight that came along bound homeward.

One day I jumped from the train at the summit and landed on the track right in front of another train, which was bound down the hill.

I endeavored to jump the other train, but slipped and fell beneath the wheels.

As I fell I grabbed the step and, after being dragged beneath the car for some distance, succeeded in pulling myself up.

You can imagine how scared I was, and, indeed, my companions, who had witnessed the whole affair, were as white-faced as myself.

It was a good lesson to us all, and we ceased to frequent the freight yards in pursuit of our pleasure.

It was a miraculous escape, and I wish to warn my other young friends and readers of BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY against catching on trains as a pastime.

### Killing a Bear.

(By Leslie Enderle, Texas.)

About three years ago my brother John and I went hawk hunting.

First we saddled our horses, got our lassoes and guns and started out. We had ridden about a mile when, just as we were riding around a thicket, we saw a large bear about one hundred yards ahead. We rode behind the thicket right quick to decide what to do. We were anxious to get his hide, but our guns were too small a caliber to shoot him with, so we decided to rope him. John would go on one side and I on the other. We rode out from behind the bushes. I certainly was afraid because he might get us.

As we neared him he just looked up, but didn't seem a bit alarmed. We got within about thirty feet of him

and then began swinging our ropes, and as I counted three our ropes went flying in the air, both dropping right over his head.

Our horses were good cow horses and made a quick jump, sending the bear over.

He was very mad and jumped up and went for me, but John was ready, and turning his horse quickly, jerked him head over heels. He stood up on his hind legs and commenced walking along the rope toward me, but down he went again.

He tried several times to get to us, but he could not do it. Our horses were now beginning to play out.

A large oak tree was standing near, so I shouted to John to help get him up to it, and wind him to it. After tugging hard we got him up to it. Slowly and carefully I rode around the tree; then John made a round. Our horses were back on their haunches, pulling so hard. The bear growled and bit at the rope. One after another we rode around him until we had him tight. I then got off my horse, which still pulled back. With my knife up-lifted I slowly walked up behind him and then with all my strength drove the knife to the hilt in his heart. At the same time the bear struck back at me, but I got out of his way. The blood streamed out of him and in a few minutes he was dead.

We loosened the ropes and he then rolled over. We skinned him and went home, both of us still trembling from fright.

### At the Brink of a Precipice.

(By Rollin H. Eddy.)

Two summers ago I went with my cousin to Denver, Colo.

One day as we were walking through a very rugged and mountainous country we came to a precipice where a very good view of the surrounding country could be obtained. My cousin was for going down into the valley below, but I preferred staying up where I was for a while, but he did not agree with my plan and it led into a discussion.

What I said was too much for him, and as he came at me with clinched fist I thought that I would strike the first blow, so I struck at him but missed him. He at once came at me with more fury than ever.

When he was within two feet of me I struck him a blow in the face. This made him more angry, and then for a full minute he did nothing.

But suddenly he made a dash for me and caught me up in his arms, and ran toward the precipice. I saw that it meant certain death to be hurled over that awful precipice, and so just as he was within six feet of the precipice I struck him a stunning blow on the head. He fell as though dead and I was hurled over his head and just escaped going over the brink.

After restoring my cousin—for he was stunned by the blow that I dealt him—I walked back to the hotel with him and a few days later returned to my home in the East.

Worth of Tricks & Make-ups, sent postpaid for 25 cents stamps or 5¢ 1¢. A nice Mustache or full Beard, Irish or Wild Whiskers, new color, bottle Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Burns Cork to blacken up, 1m. Rubber Mouth, big teeth, secret & apparatus for performing the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer is to get your address to send my large list, cards of plays, wigs, tricks & acts, latest novelties. Mention paper: you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate finger Ring FREE, send also. Address Chas. Marshall, Mfr., Lockport, N.Y.



# HERE'S A NEW CONTEST! A CORKER!

The Contest just starting is going to be the greatest we ever ran. It's an entirely new idea. The Prizes are new and the finest we ever offered. The other contests held in the **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY** have all made splendid success, but this one is sure to break all records. Why? Because it is a brand-new idea—a contest every boy in America has an equal chance in, and because the prizes beat anything ever offered before. All you have to do is to write out an account of any of your

## Curious Dreams.

Everybody has had remarkable dreams, and anybody who sends in an account of one has a chance of winning one of the prizes. They consist of

### THREE FIRST-CLASS PHOTOGRAPHIC OUTFITS,

Including Camera and all Appliances for Taking and Developing Photographs.

### Five Hunting Axes and Five Hunting Knives.

Think of the fun you can have this winter with one of those cameras. You can take and develop photographs of all your friends. Full directions go with each camera. Think how useful and handy a first-rate hunting knife or ax will be when you go hunting or trapping in the woods this winter.

**To Win a Prize.**—Write an account of any curious or remarkable dream you have had—no matter what it was about. Tell it in five hundred words, and send it with the coupon you will find on this page, properly filled out, to the **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City.

### HERE IS A LIST OF THE PRIZES:

The three boys who send in the three most interesting accounts will each receive an **Eastman Pocket Kodak**, with complete outfit. The camera takes picture  $1\frac{1}{2} \times 2$  inches; uses film, and has capacity for twelve pictures without reloading; weight six ounces. This wonderful little camera takes pictures equal to the most expensive. It makes negatives of such sharpness and definition that beautiful enlargements of any size can be made from them. Has perfect Achromatic Lens of fixed focus, Rotary Shutter, with sets of three stops, square View Finder, and covered with fine Seal Grain Leather. Takes snap shots or time exposures. Easily carried in pocket or on bicycle. Complete with roll of film for twelve exposures and Leather Carrying Case, with room for three extra film cartridges.

The five boys who send in the five next best accounts will each receive a **Safety Hunting Ax**. Dimensions over all  $11 \times 4$  inches; weight 18 ounces. The blade is made of solid tool steel, finely tempered and highly polished. The handle is made of mild steel, nickle plated on copper, with handle plates of engraved hard rubber. The guard is of sheet steel, hinged on a spring in such a manner that either open or closed it is firmly held in position. The construction is unique

and of such a nature as to make it almost impossible for one part to become detached from another. The head has an oblong semi-circular recess milled in either side to receive the slotted end of handle, which is accurately milled to a close fit and firmly held by a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch steel screw. This method of handle fastening prevents any liability of the blade working loose on the handle. The upper part of the handle is slotted on the under side to receive the folded sheet steel guard, which is so arranged as to be firmly held by a flat steel bar when open or closed.

The five boys who send in the five next best accounts will each receive a **Sportsman's Ideal Hunting Knife**. There is about as much difference in point of utility and beauty between one of our "Ideal" hunting knives and any other knife on the market as there is between a grizzly bear and a porcupine. They are hand forged, hand tempered, hand tested by the rigidest possible test and finished in a manner that makes them the handsomest knives in the market. The "Ideal" knives are made with 5-inch blades, leather handle, brass and fibre trimmings, with polished stag-horn tip. A handsome black or russet case with each knife.

Now, Boys, You See Your Chance!

It's Up to You to Win a Prize!

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Name.....  
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Title of Story.....

This Contest closes **December 1st**. All entries must be in by that date.

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